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RATHLYNN.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"THE SAXON IN IRELAND."

"Oh, how full of briars is this work-a-day world!"
As You Like It.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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RATHLYNN.

CHAPTER I.

"Oh, how hast thou with jealousy infected the sweetness of affiance!" *Henry V.*

TIME rolled on. Winter was now fairly set in, and I spent much time, accompanied by Larry, Dan McBride, and Mick Daly, in wild-fowl and woodcock shooting, sometimes among the sand-banks of Kilcullen Bay, or the Lough, or the native oak woods that adorned its banks. On these occasions I would sometimes dismiss the men, and walk over the mountain to Ballybog, where I was now an established friend of the family. I never approached the place from the lake,

being anxious to conceal my motions from a certain lynx-eyed female, who would most assuredly have discovered my haunts, and possibly have called me to an inconvenient account.

But no—Florence was incapable of this —the very supposition wrongs her; yet she would think it strange that I, of my own free will, interested myself in a subject which, when she requested it, I declined to interfere with.

As yet there was no breach in my intimacy with the Fitzpatricks—I was still frequently their guest. I shot with Archibald, walked occasionally with Florence, and did all I could to retain matters in a prudent equilibrium. It was clearly my interest that no rupture should take place; yet, at the same time, I endeavoured to adopt a line of conduct that would exempt me from any future embarrassment or

inconvenience. Cold and haughty as Florence was generally to others, to me she was now ever familiar, and ever confidential. I admired and even loved her, but it was with a brother's affection. On many points our feelings and thoughts were in unison, and she often said that if I was to leave Rathlynn, "she should have no companion left but the winds and waves, and the lights and shadows on the mountains."

One morning, as I was proceeding to inspect some draining on the higher lands behind my house, Larry suddenly met me and inquired if I was going up the Lough. I replied in the negative, when he said, significantly,—

"There is some game, master, at the waterfall, maybe you would not like to lose it?"

I looked steadily at the fellow, but

his countenance had relapsed into its usual grin.

"What do you mean, Larry? Who is at the waterfall?"

"Sure then, master, I did not say anybody was at the waterfall; but, maybe, the same 'gintleman' you once had in the boat may have taken a walk that way—that's all."

There is something very repugnant to my feelings to bandy confidence with servants and dependants, and though I knew Larry meant to convey more than he said, I remained silent.

"The boat is all ready," continued Larry, "and I will fetch your honour's gun."

"Wait till I ask you, Larry—don't be so forward in matters that do not concern you."

"Don't concern me, is it? What con-

cerns the master must concern his man. By Gor!—your honour is not as sharp as I took you to be. But I am told it is no concern of mine."

Larry really looked displeased.

"Now tell me plainly," said I, "what you mean? Why cannot you speak openly?"

"Bekase your honour would not like it. I would not know anything about anything—but still I would like to serve the master."

I at once saw Larry's meaning, and could not but admire the delicacy of the poor fellow.

"Well, then," said I, "say no more. Go and take the boat up to Flynn's cottage, and I will join you there by-and-by. If I do not come, return home, as I shall want you in the evening."

I thus got rid of Larry, and hoped he would also by this be prevented from watching my motions. I was aware something was on the *tapis*. Florence wished to see me. But should I go? Would it not be the height of folly? Perhaps there was some new scheme afloat relative to the Ballybog family. By declining this interview I might lose an opportunity of being useful to them. The case must be urgent —otherwise would Florence have proposed a private interview? Prudence protested against the step I was about to take, but an anxious curiosity prevailed. I returned to the house—saw the boat move off—took my gun, and avoided by a circuitous route the precincts of the "Mount."

I arrived at the small lake among the mountains, from whence issued the

stream I have already described as flowing into the Lough below. Here I fired successfully at some wild ducks, and I well knew that my friend below would by this be informed as to who was in the neighbourhood.

Forcing my way down a path half-choked with briars and weeds, and following the devious wanderings of the brook as it dashed furiously downwards, I at length reached what was emphatically termed "the waterfall," and there, sitting on a rock by the boiling basin into which the waters fell, I saw Florence Fitzpatrick.

She rose and greeted me kindly, and we walked on for some paces in silence.

"I thought you would come," said she, casting her dark eyes full in my face — "though I am well aware that

you disapprove of these clandestine meetings quite as much as I do."

"Necessity only can excuse them," I replied, "and I well know you would not have sent for me thus had not the occasion been greater than the risk."

"Risk!" echoed she—"risk of what? Are we not old enough to judge for ourselves? But I understand you," continued she, after a pause; "do not be alarmed—I am not one to take any undue advantage of your generous disregard of consequences."

I felt embarrassed — I could not tell how to answer this appeal.

"It is the good of others, not our own, that we are seeking — therefore, why should we fear? I do not."

She again looked up, and fixed her dark eyes steadily on my face—I could not meet their gaze.

"Mr. Wyville," continued she, in a voice trembling with emotion, "you have already withheld your co-operation, and perhaps prudently; but now I must claim and must have your assistance. Since his ridiculous failure with that young woman at Ballybog, Archibald has been meditating revenge—or, rather I should say he is, I fear, scheming to get his victim into his power. You well know his disposition—daring, cunning, and reckless!"

"But why," said I, "do you take such an interest in this matter?—why should not your brother be free to follow his own plans, without such decided, and, I fear, useless interference on your part?"

"It is a fair question, and I will answer it, however painful to myself to do so. I know you will not divulge

our secret. The fact is, my father is deeply indebted to the Corrigans—they can at any moment seize on our estate, and turn us out to absolute beggary—and from this, the union of my brother with Julia can alone save us. The poor girl has loved and admired him from a boy, and she has never swerved in her faith, though she well knows our position. She is amiable and good, but did she even suspect my brother of any other connection, she would not hesitate one moment to cast him off. And oh! what would be the wretched consequence of this? You little know, Mr. Wyville, for indeed I cannot tell you all—it would be disgrace as well as ruin! I am thought proud—God knows how little I have to be proud of—I stand indeed aloof, but it is because I anticipate the time when the world will shun us.

How to stop Archibald in his mad career I know not. I dare not even hint it to my father—he is violent and hasty; and as to my poor dear mother, any attempt to make her understand the case, and act prudently and advisedly, would be fruitless. Do you blame me, then, Mr. Wyville, if, under these circumstances, I step beyond bounds, and dare to act for myself?"

"Have you seen this dangerous lady?" I asked, willing to turn the subject.

"Lady, indeed!—she is a mere peasant girl. Her father is a low adventurer, and doubtless encourages this connection. She is, I believe, sufficiently handsome—that she is insinuating in her manners I do not doubt, for Archibald is not to be caught by common attractions. Oh! that I could annihilate her! She knows of my brother's engage-

ment, and still persists in encouraging him."

"How," I inquired, "was she informed of that circumstance?"

"I wrote to her anonymously, and sent my letter by Bridget Cooney."

"And who is she?"

"Don't you know?—the nurse, &c., of the district. Everybody knows Bridget Cooney."

We had now retraced our steps, and stood again near the waterfall, looking into the turbid pool at our feet. I wished to know the real occasion of our meeting there, but could not again venture to inquire. Indeed, I felt it more delicate to make our interview appear as if merely accidental.

"I am glad we have met," said Florence, at length; "for if I cannot ask you to interfere on our behalf, you

can at least so far befriend me as to make quiet inquiries."

"Of whom and of what?" said I.

"I will tell you. It seems that under some pretence or other, Archibald introduced himself to these Donovans, and fell in love with the young woman. How it was I know not, but somehow or other she took him unawares, and in a frolic pushed him into the water."

"In a frolic? How do you know it was in a frolic?"

"It could not have been otherwise, for it is manifest she encourages his addresses."

"It is a curious mode of encouragement. I should rather think this action of hers was rather intended to damp his ardour."

"Do you think, then, he had been violent?"

"I cannot doubt it. Why should a modest, well-conducted young lady push her lover into a deep lake, and place his life in jeopardy, merely to have her joke at his expense?"

"Modest, well-conducted young lady!" re-echoed Florence; "Mr. Wyville, do you know her, then?"

A deadly pallor overspread her countenance, and she sat down, as if unable to support herself. I saw I had gone too far.

"You forbade my making her acquaintance," said I; "but I will be candid. I have seen her once by accident, and received little better treatment at her hands than your brother. She set a huge dog upon me, and I only escaped by leaping a fence, and plunging into a bog."

Again were those dark eyes fixed

upon me with an intenseness that showed too plainly the volcano within. Too apparent was the fact I had before only suspected—Florence was not indifferent!

"Mr. Wyville," said she, "I cannot, will not believe that you, too, have been entrapped by this odious woman. I want but this to cause my cup of mortification to overflow. I should then, indeed, be friendless. How came it that you saw her?"

"I was returning from shooting — I missed my way, and found myself near Ballybog. I merely approached the house to inquire. The result you know."

"I have no right to question you further," said she, again fixing upon me those large, expressive, searching orbs of hers; "but I do hope — I

would feel convinced that — that — but it is no matter," continued she; "I think this woman will drive me mad — by night and by day she haunts me. Is there no mode of getting rid of her out of the country?" Her voice here sank to a whisper. "Oh! could that be accomplished, I should once more know happiness and security."

Another long pause, and I stood by her gazing upon the restless waters, as they eddied and bubbled in the basin at our feet.

"I know you incapable of falsehood, Mr. Wyville," said she at length; "and, therefore, I credit what you have told me. I am sorry you have seen her; but you will not—that is, you do not wish to see her again, do you?"

She placed her hand upon mine, which rested on the rock on which she sat. She looked up in my face, and, for the first time, I saw that usually cold, proud countenance relax into an expression of tenderness and earnest entreaty.

I felt more and more embarrassed. I did not wish for a scene. I well knew that these fair Milesians were equally ardent in love and in hate. I was getting gradually enclosed in a net, but how to break through it with safety and honour I could not tell. Her warm hand still rested on mine; her eyes, full of tenderness, were still fixed on mine; she made way for me to sit beside her, and I did not, could not refuse.

And there we sat long, under the feeble rays of a winter's sun, convers-

ing of various matters, and on various subjects, which I purposely started in order to ward off the awkwardness of silence.

So that we were sitting there and holding sweet converse together, she cared not for all else, happy, as she said, in the conviction that she had a friend, and one, too, to whom she could open her heart, detail the circumstances of her position, and advise with on all those points so material to her own welfare and that of her family.

In the course of our conversation I found that information had been conveyed to her that her brother had formed some desperate plan with regard to Mary Donovan, and it was to ascertain what this plan was, and to thwart it, that she was, as a *dernier ressort*, induced to apply to me.

I again assured her that I did not wish to interfere—that our uniting in any plan to defeat her brother's designs would be construed in a way not creditable to either of us—that if any measures were taken they had better be distinct and separate.

"In no case," said I, soothingly, for I saw this view of the matter displeased her, "would I see a deliberate plan of seduction pursued under my eyes without endeavouring to thwart it—but there is a measure of prudence and discretion to be observed, without which interference would not only be impertinent but vain. Though we cannot act in concert, do not suppose I shall be asleep or indifferent. More than this I cannot say."

"But am I, then, to understand that at any rate it is at my request, and

in accordance with my wishes only, that you take any interest in this matter? It is not from any personal feeling to the Donovans themselves?"

"You would not have me go quite so far as to say that. It is impossible not to feel interested in a family so unfortunately placed as they are."

The frown was gathering on that lofty brow, when I added,—

"But of course you are aware that it was at your request, and in accordance with your wishes only, that I ever even entered into any discussion on this subject. It had otherwise been a matter of indifference to me. I should never have known the Donovans even by name."

"And, perhaps," whispered she, softly, and with a deep sigh, "it might have been as well had I never mentioned them."

We rose, and parted. With gun on shoulder I proceeded at a rapid pace to Doonore, where I called upon the D'Arcies, and having left there the produce of my morning's sport, I crossed the Lough in their boat as far as Flynn's cottage, where I found Larry and the boys waiting for me.

Perplexed and ill at ease with myself and everybody else, I returned home.

CHAPTER II.

"Indeed she is,
Tho' of a low condition, composed
Of all those graces dames of highest birth,
Tho' rich in Nature's bounties, should be proud of."

I now often visited Ballybog, and scrutinized with a keen eye every member of the establishment. I did not altogether like Thady Houlagan. The fellow not only never refused money, but often hinted what he could and would do for "a friend with the open hand." Mr. Donovan and his daughter seemed to have implicit confidence in him, for in many things he appeared to them

both zealous and faithful, but I could not help suspecting that his zeal and fidelity merely kept pace with his own interest.

Mr. Donovan afforded a perhaps not uncommon instance of self-delusion. He had in earlier life been an indefatigable student in chemical and mineralogical science, and I conjectured from hints he dropped occasionally, that in endeavouring to make these sciences a source of wealth, he had lost the substance in grasping at the shadow. His idea was that the crust of the earth was full of riches, could we only know how to extract them. Now that his mind had become enfeebled by disappointment and disease, this idea assumed the form of a monomania. His whole thoughts were in the depths of the earth, and he had a conviction, which neither arguments

nor past experience could overcome, that even yet some great success would crown his labours, and lead him back to fortune and to fame. Poor old man! On this subject he often prattled long and hopefully, and it were unkind, as indeed it was useless, to attempt by argument or by contradiction to undeceive him.

A more melancholy position than that of Mary Donovan could not be conceived. Without companion or friend to assist her, all the cares of her position fell heavily upon her. It was enough to weigh her down—and in such a secluded spot, too, where all aid and comfort were utterly out of her reach. But selfishness was no part of her character, and she took refuge in her principles, and girded herself for the battle. In devoting herself to her duties she would allow of no repining, no sickening of

the heart, no weariness. She loved her father, and where she loved no sacrifice was too great, no exertion too severe. She was generally cheerful, or appeared so, where there was everything to depress, and in the management of their narrow resources she extracted a degree of comfort which most others would have given up in despair.

And yet her father was not particularly kind. He had no thought for anything but his wild schemes, and little did he appreciate that most precious of all treasures, the entire love and devotion of his only child. It was a sight as affecting as it was beautiful, to see this poor girl watching her father's every look, administering to every want, bearing meekly every repulse, listening patiently to every new absurdity that occupied the old man's brain.

I felt happy sometimes to lighten her labours, and sitting by Mr. Donovan would listen to his vast projects, canvass without directly opposing them, till at length I established myself in his favour, and he would wish for my presence far oftener than I could indulge him.

At first Mary was shy and taciturn with me—seldom entered the room when I was there, and made me perfectly understand by her manner that I was her father's friend, not hers. One evening, however, after a fine cloudless day, as I was returning home by the mountain path, we met on the wild moor about a mile from Ballybog. She smiled a good evening, and would have passed me, but as I thought this was a good opportunity of having some confidential conversation, I turned back with her, and we moved quietly on side by side.

"I am glad, Miss Donovan," said I, at length, "that I have been so fortunate as to meet with you. Will you allow me the privilege of a friend—may I speak to you of your affairs?"

She started and turned suddenly towards me.

"I do not wish to alarm you, nor yet to broach any unpleasant subject, only so far as your own personal safety is concerned."

"Thank you, Mr. Wyville, I do not know that I have anything to fear."

"I am glad of it," replied I; "but appearances, you know, are not always to be trusted. Have you seen Archibald Fitzpatrick lately?"

"I have not; not since the scene you witnessed near the Lake."

"Has he been at or near Ballybog since?"

"I believe he has; Thady Houlagan told me he was near the house, but I absolutely refused to see him."

"More than once?"

"Yes; several times."

"Now that I may claim to be a friend of your father's, may I further inquire how he procured an introduction into your house? I know my question will appear impertinent, but I have a reason for my inquiries."

"Indeed," replied she, blushing deeply, "I may not answer that question."

"It was probably by pretending to know more of Mr. Donovan's circumstances than other people?"

She did not answer, but began to walk on more rapidly.

"One more question, and I will close a subject which is manifestly embarrassing."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Wyville; it is not embarrassing, were I justified or at liberty to betray my father's secrets."

"Secrets! then it is as I surmised? You may trust me, Miss Donovan. A friend may, and I think will, be needed. I fear for you. I know Archibald Fitzpatrick, and he is not the man to understand a repulse."

The poor girl stood still and looked me steadily in the face for a moment.

"Oh, tell me what is it you mean? Do you really know anything? I will not deceive you, I am myself uneasy, and have been ever since that day. Oh, is it not cruel thus to annoy and persecute the friendless and the helpless!"

"But you shall not be persecuted nor annoyed. Only be candid with me, and no harm shall happen which a deep interest and a steady vigilance can avert.

While you are so cold and repulsive, you will render all my services nugatory."

"Cold and repulsive! Oh, how little do you know my real feelings! Do I not feel deeply grateful to you for your kindness to my poor father? But you must feel that I am peculiarly situated. I am in reality alone and unprotected. I fear quicksands where perhaps they may not be; and I suspect every one, for I read and am told that the world is false. Do you wonder then that I shun all contact with it?"

How well this young creature spoke. I listened surprised and pleased. She might have been brought up in a Court, and her manners, too, at once so winning, so superior to her station. And yet the thought came over me that such was not an uncommon case among the Irish

peasantry. But then her language and her pronunciation were not Irish, but her dress was, and so was her name. My interest in her increased. I was willing to make out some mystery — but no, Mary Donovan was and could be nothing more than the daughter of a ruined speculator. Besides, she was no "Glorvina"—she did not sing—she did not awaken the melodies of her country on the harp—she did not draw, nor embroider; all she did was merely useful, and her only accomplishment that I knew of was filial affection and reverence.

"I grant you," resumed I, in answer to her appeal, "that the world is deemed selfish, and cold and heartless, but there are exceptions, and the isolation you speak of, and which you would adopt in your own case, is

neither called for nor expedient. Your withdrawal from social intercourse will save you neither from insult nor violence; the more you stand alone the more helpless you become, and more accessible to injury. Believe me, Miss Donovan, there are those in the world that are not demons."

"And there are those that are; how am I to distinguish?"

"By your own natural good sense and observation."

"I fear to trust them," replied she. "We are told that Satan often deludes us under the garb of an Angel of Light. Indeed I wish, Mr. Wyville, that I could feel the full force of your argument."

"You may. Make a friend of me, and I pledge my honour as an Englishman that you shall have no cause to

repent it. You are in danger, and I would shield you as a brother. Trust me."

"As a brother!" re-echoed she, mournfully.

"I would I had a brother, for I sometimes feel as if I was slipping on the verge of a precipice, and no hand to help me. But you hint at my being in danger; explain further what you mean. I dislike and I fear that Mr. Fitzpatrick, but he surely will not again insult me if I avoid him. Surely, such conduct were as dangerous as it is mean and unmanly!"

"You are in a strange, semi-barbarous country, where morality admits of a very wide interpretation, and actions which in my country we should deem worthy of the hangman's notice are

viewed by some with approbation, and greeted with applause."

"Alas! you alarm me. I feel the force of what you say—what shall I do? My poor father cannot aid me, and as to Thady Houlagan—"

"He is a rascal, and not to be trusted," said I, "confide in me, Miss Donovan. I have a lively interest in the affairs of you and yours. I have the sanction of your only friend, Father Roche. Admit me to your confidence —accept my offers of service, and I will never deceive you."

She paused for a few moments, as if in reflection, and then steadily regarding me for an instant, she frankly gave me her hand, and we parted.

How much is understood in a mere action. Though Mary Donovan had given me no word of encouragement,

nor even a look expressive of any peculiar feeling, yet *the manner* of her giving me her hand spoke more and meant far more than a mere verbal acquiescence. I felt now on a different footing with the family at Ballybog. Mary no longer avoided me—we read, conversed, and walked together without any reserve other than became our relative positions. The more I saw of her, the more did my interest increase. I found her strictly upright in all her feelings and intentions. She had no *arrières pensées.* She was certainly highly sensitive in her nature, yet perfectly truthful, and under a charming simplicity was hidden a large fund of firmness and common sense. "Her life was gentle." It was spent, and solely spent, in the quiet performance of her duties, and all the petty jealousies

and those lower feelings of our nature, which are fostered if not produced by a constant contact with the world, she knew nothing of.

Such was Mary Donovan, and the more I saw of her character and of its spotless innocence the more did I resolve to watch over her with all the zeal and affection of a brother. I made a point of treating her always with the most delicate attention. I never indulged in the slightest levity of conduct or conversation, but I so framed my conduct as to win and to deserve her utmost esteem and confidence. Ulterior intentions I had none—the daughter of a bankrupt speculator was not to be even thought of in nearer connection with the only son of the proud, dictatorial, and high-born Admiral Wyville. And so confident was I in this feeling, that in our present inter-

course the thought of love never once crossed my mind—I felt the thing was impossible.

It was one morning early that I took my boat up the Lough, accompanied by "the boys" and Larry Lanigan. There had been a sharp frost, and I expected sport in shooting the wild fowl. I did not intend to call at Ballybog—indeed, to avoid notice I generally went there by the mountain route, for I could not take out my boat unobserved by the families at the Mount or at Doonore, and I had special reasons that my movements should not be observed by them. I was more than usually successful in my pursuit, and accordingly I sent Larry with a plentiful supply to Ballybog, while I proceeded in the boat to Doonore, where I had been invited to lunch the first time I came up the Lough.

I always liked the D'Arcies. The staid and manly bearing of the father contrasted favourably with the lively and dashing manners of the daughters. I was always kindly received, and the young ladies often condescended to admit me into their confidence on those trifling matters that occurred in the neighbourhood.

"Where have you been, and what have you been doing during the last fortnight, Mr. Wyville?" said the sprightly Miss Susan. "Though of course we never do look out for you particularly, yet, as the lake is before us, we happen to know you have almost deserted it of late."

"It is cold weather for the lake," replied I, "and then, you know, there is the farm to attend to, and the Christmas accounts to be made up."

"Oh, very likely—what a toil they must be!—Rathlynn might be one-half of Donegal," said Miss Fanny, "to take up a young gentleman's whole time in balancing his accounts. Papa takes about two hours in every week for the same purpose, and he is very particular. But I daresay Admiral Wyville is fearfully cross and exacting."

"I daresay he is," rejoined Susan, "I can imagine him wearing his hair in a tie, with a cocked hat and embroidered coat, and a stiff walk and habitual frown."

"Mr. Wyville, is the Admiral a short man?"

"In one respect," replied I, smiling; "he speaks rather short, else he rises six feet out of his shoes."

"Does he?" said Susan; "what an awful man he must be!—only imagine

an admiral six feet high, on his quarter-deck, swearing at and scolding his men! I should be frightened to death."

"My father never swears," said I; "he may be severe, but he is not cross."

"But I see you are," said Fanny; "and so we will drop the subject."

After an invitation to spend a long day the ensuing week, I took my leave, and the young ladies accompanied me to the boat. To my astonishment, I there found Larry. I was afraid to notice his presence, and so we put off from shore.

"What brought you back, Larry?" said I, half displeased.

"Because I thought your honour would like a shot at a rabbit, and I saw several out a little above Flynn's cottage."

"How did you cross the Lake?"

"Cross the Lake, is it? I held up a signal, and the boys fetched me."

I could see there was more in this, and I accordingly ordered the men to row across, and loaded my two barrels as preparatory to a shot.

"Well, Larry," said I, as soon as we had entered a thick copse out of sight, "what now? Any news?"

"The devil a bit, except, master, that all the young ladies are putting their comethers upon you, which is no news at all; and by the holy seven, I don't know which way the wind blows wid you."

"It blows no way, Larry. So tell me what is on your tongue."

"If it blows no way just now, master, it will blow every way, and a hurricane too some day, if we don't

look out in time. There's a breeze getting up now."

"A breeze now?"

"Sure, didn't I see that poor crawling ownshuck, Thady Houlagan, talking with Mr. Archibald, close to the garden hedge at Ballybog? Egad! when fire and oil come together, there's sure to be a blaze."

"Did you hear anything?"

"Faith, no—not the shadow of a syllable did I catch, and I was a-feared of being seen myself, so I delivered the present at the front door, and came skulking away among the bushes, to tell your honour."

"Thank you, Larry," said I; "you shall be no loser by your wit. There is something brewing, no doubt; but what can be done?"

"If I only knew your honour's mind,

and which of these young ladies you cast your eyes upon, I could speak, and musha-throth, I'd be the man to help ye; as it is, you have three or four frying on the gridiron at once. Cannot you make up your mind, master?"

"Three or four, Larry? Pray who are they?"

"Egad! a blind man might see that! There is these two Miss D'Arcies almost eating you up, and faith no wonder, considering the quiet place they live in, and they such wild spirits, and then this colleen dhas at Ballybog, as sweet a cratur as all Ireland can show, and that's something to say of her. Hasn't she the foot and ankle for dancing the Polthogue? Sure she's the lightest step in the Barony, and she scarce brushes the dew from the heather as she trips up

the mountain side. If I was a jintleman by the same token I should not be long a-choosing. But then she's poor, and her father old and helpless. When they were *at* themselves,* warm and dacent as they onst were, it was different, no doubt, but the fair face and beautiful form go for little when the pocket is empty. Then there is Miss Florence, walking up and down, early and late, as if she did not know her own mind, looking uneasy and restless, and wishing to be with your honour all day and every day, if she knew how to manage it, and everybody says that you are after 'pulling a string with *her*' anyhow. And now master," continued Larry, concluding his long speech, "which is it to be? Only say which is the craft, and by

* In prosperity.

the mortial we'll be down upon her, and all sails set."

"What if I should say that I care for none of them?" said I. "And *that*, Larry, is about the truth of the matter."

"Then you will have your hands full. In this country love and hatred are very near neighbours. You would not behave unkind to all the dear girls, master?"

"For once, Larry," said I, seriously, "let me set you right. I do not intend to marry anybody at present, and have not the least thought of making any one of the young ladies you have mentioned my wife, even if they would consent, which I have no reason to believe. So now let the subject drop."

"I beg your honour's pardon, but what will Miss Florence say?"

"I don't know what she can say — I have never given her any reason to say anything."

Larry shrugged his shoulders and slunk behind me, and I walked on, pondering what must be done. It was very manifest that Archibald was again at work, and that some scheme was on foot. I dismissed Larry and the boys, and when they were well down the Lough I took the path to Ballybog.

CHAPTER III.

"The love of wicked friends converts to fear;
That fear, to hate."

Richard II.

As I walked along my thoughts naturally reverted to what Larry had said. That a young man, unmarried, of considerable expectations, should attract the attention of a few young ladies who were anxious to be settled was not extraordinary.

But then came the grave question — had I given any one of these young ladies reasonable cause to suppose that

my attentions to her in particular had a serious meaning? I carefully reviewed my conduct, and came out of the self-examination conscience clear.

Florence Fitzpatrick only gave me the slightest cause for uneasiness. Though our intercourse, and the strange and unlucky positions into which it had thrown us, were altogether of her own seeking, yet, had I acted prudently in not rejecting her confidence, and absolutely refusing to become cognizant of her schemes? It is more easy in our cooler moments to see the propriety of thus acting, than to carry it out in a moment of surprise or excitement. I felt this, and, therefore, though I could not blame myself, yet I did feel some inward uneasiness as to my relation with this handsome and high-spirited woman.

Next, my thoughts reverted to the family at Ballybog, and I was about to examine myself on this subject, when, on crossing the summit of the ridge which divided me from the place of my destination, I saw two figures standing in the valley below, and apparently in earnest conversation. I had no difficulty in recognizing Mary Donovan and Archibald Fitzpatrick!

The sight threw me into an agitation which surprised myself. My blood ran cold in my veins—again and again I looked, hoping it was a delusion—but no—there they stood, and in a place, too, most suitable for an appointment.

How else could she have been there, and alone? Often and often had she told me that she never now ventured from the house unless accompanied by Thady

Houlagan or his daughter Ailey. Had I been grossly cajoled and deceived, and was there, after all, a secret understanding between Mary and Archibald? He was handsome, and of a dare-devil kind of manner, which is often attractive to the weaker sex, and if she was ignorant of his engagement to another, what was there unnatural in her conduct?

I took my stand behind a projecting rock, and watched their motions. As I stood there, I was more and more surprised at my own emotions, and the intense interest I took in this matter. Surely it was nothing to me. The girl had been warned, and she was now acting with her eyes open. She was evidently deceitful, and was playing a deep game. Yet no! I could not believe Mary capable of this—all that simplicity and truthfulness of character, which I

had observed in her, could not in one so young be mere appearance. True, she was in a very equivocal position, but then it was all capable of explanation. I resolved at once—I would go down and meet them.

Neither perceived me till I got almost close to them, there being a high bank between us. At the moment I came in sight, Mary had turned towards her home, and he had seized her hand to detain her. Both started with surprise, but the expression of their countenances how different! His pale with anger and disappointment—hers radiant with joy and confidence. She knew she was now safe from insult, and making immediate use of her liberty, she bounded off, and was soon lost in the rising copse before her.

Archibald and I looked at each other

with mutual embarrassment. The position was awkward enough on both sides, and it was some moments before either spoke.

"What brought you this way, Mr. Wyville?" at length questioned he, in a somewhat peremptory tone, as if it had been my purpose to interrupt him.

"Surely, Mr. Archibald Fitzpatrick," replied I, coolly, "the mountain paths are as open to me as to you."

"It is strange you should arrive at such a moment. It could not have been by mere accident, and if you choose to dog me, I shall find a way to chain you to your own kennel."

"You will find that a difficult matter," replied I, my blood rising at this impertinence.

"Shall I?—we shall see. It is a hard

thing that one cannot walk abroad without being watched."

"I never watched you, nor thought it worth my while to do so, and if you, an engaged man, choose to meet a young lady in so sequestered a spot as this, it is no concern of mine. You cannot be surprised if your conduct is seen and noticed."

"An engaged man, do you say? Why, I am no more engaged than yourself; Florence will not be well pleased to hear that you are so often at Ballybog, and that you have taken the young lady there under your friendly protection."

"What Miss Fitzpatrick may think is of no consequence to me. I am free to act as I please. I owe no fealty of any kind to Miss Fitzpatrick, nor to any one else."

"Are you serious?"

"I am serious—I mean literally what I say."

"You do? This must be seen to. Let me tell you at once that the Fitzpatricks are the last people in the world to be made fools of. It will not be long before you discover that."

"And let me tell you that I neither fear the Fitzpatricks nor any of their faction. If they dare to molest me, it shall be at their own peril. And so now I wish you good day—I am going to Ballybog."

It is difficult to conceive the spite, rage, and malevolence that disfigured the countenance of my antagonist, as, having said thus much, I slowly walked away. For a few moments he stood regarding me, and then strode off in the direction of Flynn's cottage.

"Here then," thought I, as I ascended the ridge before me, "is a pretty prospect for a man in a strange country. A regular feud with my nearest neighbour and the chance, without any real fault of mine, of being called to account for jilting a young lady. Truly, Larry was right, and there is a storm not only brewing, but threatening rapidly to discharge its full fury on my head. Well—let it burst," said I, aloud, as I strode rapidly along; "so long as I do not act disgracefully, why should I fear?"

"Fear what?" said a sweet voice, close to me, which I soon recognized to be that of Mary Donovan; "what is it you have to fear, Mr. Wyville? Alas! I am afraid that your friendship for us has involved you in some quarrel. Is it not so?"

"I really do not know," replied I; "nor indeed do I care. I am master of my own actions, and I wonder who it is that will control me?"

"Not the master of your own actions quite, I think, Mr. Wyville," said she, blushing deeply. "You cannot say that."

"Why not?" replied I, greatly surprised. "The friend from whom you just parted must have given you some novel information."

"Friend!—oh! Mr. Wyville," said she, in a tone of reproach, "you know well and truly he neither is, nor ever was, a friend to me."

"But surely, Miss Donovan, it is a fair presumption that you would have met no one in yon lone valley but a friend, and a dear one too?"

She stopped, and was evidently embarrassed.

I was confounded. Could it then be as I at first surmised, that she had really met Archibald voluntarily? The pain such a thought gave me was excessive. I could not conceal my perturbation. I gave her a look of suspicion and anger. This seemed at once to restore her to herself.

"Of what do you suspect me, Mr. Wyville? Surely you do not for one moment suppose——"

"My dear Miss Donovan," interrupted I, ashamed of my own feelings when I saw the indignant glance of those soft eyes, "I suspect nothing—I am only vexed that you did not take your usual precautions in walking thus far from home. You might again have been subjected to insult."

"I allow," said she, as we quietly resumed our walk, "that appearances are

against me; but I had a reason for wishing to be alone, and I had a reason for walking in that direction. You have justly said it was a friend I went to meet, and no other."

I started, and looked anxiously in her face.

"Shall I tell you who it was?"

I bowed somewhat stiffly.

"It was *yourself!* Oh, Mr. Wyville, whom have we for a friend but you? To whom else in our difficulties and dangers could we venture to apply?"

The poor girl leaned against a tree, and sobbed violently. Pleased and delighted as I was, yet I would not disturb this natural outburst of feeling. At once, and with a strong effort, she composed herself; and as we had now entered the domain of Ballybog, I told

her I would spend an hour there, as it was necessary we should have some further conversation.

I took my seat in the small, scantily-furnished room, not to be dignified with the name of parlour, and anxiously awaited her re-appearance.

"You will be sorry to hear that my dear father has had another of his attacks," said she, as she re-entered the room. "It is just now most unfortunate, for never was there a moment when I more need a father's protection. Yesterday I sent for Father Roche, in order to consult with him about our seeking some other asylum; but he does not advise it, and, besides, he considers that my poor father is not in a state to be removed. And still, go we must, for if there is danger elsewhere, truly there is danger here also.

I am helpless and unprotected here, and have reason even to distrust those who are most bound to serve us."

"You are right there," said I — "Thady Houlagan is a scoundrel — I know it."

"I have had several notes from Mr. Fitzpatrick," continued she, "which greatly alarm me, and my object in walking forth alone was to meet you, and to consult what was to be done."

"Meet me! How did you know I was likely to be there?"

"Your man Larry whispered to me when he brought the game that he thought you would be here this day, and soon."

"It was indeed unfortunate you fell in with Mr. Archibald Fitzpatrick; but the reason of my coming was to put you on your guard, as I knew he was

on the watch. Larry had seen him in company with Thady."

"With Thady!—alas, alas! what am I to do? Oh, Mr. Wyville, I am indeed in great perplexity. This must excuse the freedom with which I address you. My situation does not allow me to act as I would wish—like a drowning person I must catch at any straw for safety."

"I hope to prove myself better than a mere straw, Miss Donovan. Confide in me, rely on my honour, and I will engage for your safety. To commence, then, may I inquire what Archibald said to you?"

"I cannot tell you all," replied she, blushing; "of course he said many fine things about himself and his intentions."

"Did he mention me?"

"Well — yes — he did — but it was so ——indeed I cannot tell you."

"Speak out at once, I beseech you, Miss Donovan—it is of consequence you should. Did he know I was acquainted with you?"

"Oh, yes; he knew, he said, that you were often here, and that you were endeavouring to injure him in my estimation. He also used very harsh language, and said that your conduct was scandalous, as you were positively engaged to his sister."

"What a degraded villain he is! He well knows this charge to be false. I am not—I never could—I never shall be engaged to his sister. Of course to you, Miss Donovan, his object is plain in making such a statement as this."

"This is a subject which cannot interest me," replied she, simply.

I own this quiet statement, proper and discreet as it was, caused me some temporary chagrin. On reflection I felt she was right; of what consequence could it be to her to dive into the love affairs either of Archibald or myself? My sole object, equally with hers, was how she was to avoid the impending danger. I was a friend of the family, not a lover, a position which she seemed thoroughly to understand.

Before I left the house I requested to see Mr. Donovan. Poor man! There he sat close to a turf-fire, wrapped in a large dressing-gown, muttering to himself a thousand wild fancies of the past and the future. Sometimes golden visions floated across his brain, and he rubbed his hands, and laughed in his feebleness, till, exhausted, he sunk

back in his chair and dozed. Mary, like a guardian angel, sat close to him, clasping his hand in hers, and ever and anon gently wiping off the perspiration from his high and lofty forehead. Even in his helplessness and misery, his form and face were striking, and betokened gentle birth and a once powerful intellect; nor could I believe, as I looked upon him, that his social position had been low or his education deficient. On the contrary, his language was ever pure and correct, and his expressions frequently conveyed the idea that he must have been a man of considerable reading and observation. Mary accompanied me to the door when I rose to take my leave, and then, stealing softly with me down the stairs, we sat in the rustic porch to resume our consultation. Bruno laid himself down

at the feet of his young mistress, fixing his steady eye upon me, as if to protect her from any possible injury.

"Often have I wondered, Miss Donovan," said I, "how it was you and your father came to this spot, and often have I desired to be somewhat acquainted with your former history. I have gathered something from Father Roche, but that something is little indeed."

"Oh, Mr. Wyville," replied she hastily, "let this be a sealed subject. I would not willingly refuse you any information you request, but circumstances render it impossible. You see us as we are, let that be sufficient." She sighed deeply, and after a pause resumed, "You can form little idea how irksome our position here is to me. We have no pretensions, of course,

to more than the mere necessaries of life, but my poor father was born for better things, and it distresses me to see him sunk so very low. I do not care for myself, and am only too thankful to be able to be with him, and do all I can to comfort and support him, but I had hoped we might have lived in this wilderness unknown and unmolested. That it is not so is indeed a bitter grievance, and but for *your* kindness and friendship I should almost despair."

"It is, indeed, strange," I replied, "that this young man will persist in his cruel persecution of you. It shall be my care, however, to watch him, and to protect you. How that is best to be done requires consideration. In the meantime, be cautious, and do not trust your servants."

"And oh, Mr. Wyville," exclaimed the

agitated girl, clinging to my arm and looking up beseechingly in my face, "do not quarrel with that bad man. If your kindness to us should lead you into danger, I could never forgive myself."

"Do not fear," replied I, smiling and gently pressing her hand, "I believe I am a match for Mr. Archibald Fitzpatrick in everything but impudence and licentiousness."

"Well Frank," said my uncle, stretching himself in his chair, "this has been a long reading and it is getting late. I am glad to see you here before me safe and sound, for never did a young fellow take more pains to entangle himself in a dangerous net than yourself. Why, sir, your father sent you out to plough and to sow turnips, but you must needs adopt Cupid's agriculture, and harvest women's

hearts instead. I wish you well through with it, but take my advice, and don't show your manuscript to the Admiral."

"I do not intend," said I, laughing; "for it is not the kind of log-book he would approve. But I hope, sir, you do not hitherto find much fault with my proceedings?"

"Well, perhaps not, but at my age you would have acted differently. You would have learned to look after your own concerns, and to see the danger, and often the mischief of intermeddling."

"But would you have seen a helpless old man and his daughter exposed to insult and persecution, and not raised your hand to defend them?"

"Perhaps not—I was not a very wise young man myself. My poor brother, whom you never knew Frank, was as much of a Don Quixote as you. He was a

fine, noble-hearted, generous fellow, always thinking more of his friends than himself, and never weary of conferring benefits, and of succouring the unfortunate and oppressed when it was in his power. And so his love to his species ruined himself, and he found too late that philanthropy was a losing game, much praised forsooth, but seldom rewarded."

"I never heard of him before, sir," said I; "was he your elder brother?"

"No, he was two years my junior. I loved him as a brother ought, and our attachment was reciprocal. It was a great shock to me when I heard of his death. He was shipwrecked off the Spanish coast on his way to America, but the particulars could never be ascertained. Poor Philip! He had run through his fortune, been cajoled in rascally speculations, and left England for the Colonies,

in the hope of retrieving his affairs and paying his debts. His last great debt he has paid, perhaps fortunately; for he was of too kind and credulous a nature for this world. He is now in that happy place 'where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.'"

My uncle Rosse was deeply affected, and for some moments held his handkerchief before his face. I respected his grief, and said nothing. At length he rose, and fixed the following evening for resuming my narrative.

CHAPTER IV.

"Dealing with witches and with conjurors."
Henry VI., (2nd Part).

As I walked home from Ballybog that evening, my bosom was a conflicting chaos of varied and strange emotions. The more I saw of the Donovans the more my interest in them increased, and there was in Mary a devotedness to her duties and a pious resignation to the will of God that were peculiarly affecting. Adversity had chastened her spirit and called into action every noble quality of her nature, softening, instead

of destroying the more feminine characteristics of her sex.

What a thousand pities it was that she had not been in a higher sphere, and suitably educated! What a figure she would have made, had her natural powers been duly cultivated and expanded! I could not marvel at the infatuation of Archibald, but I felt more and more the necessity of circumventing his designs, if possible. That something was on the *tapis* I felt persuaded—but what it was, there were no present means of my discovering.

I was crossing the river, on my return home, when suddenly a thick mist rose out of the sea to the westward, so that it was difficult to distinguish objects even at the distance of a few yards.

Arrived at the further bank I saw close to me a figure, standing as if to

intercept my progress. I lowered my gun from my shoulder, and advanced cautiously. It was Larry.

"I waited for you here, master, because I know the enemy is abroad, and now you have come between Mr. Archibald and his plans I would advise you to keep at home after sunset."

"That shall I not for any Mr Archibald in Ireland," said I. "If any mischief is intended I know how to meet it," and I clicked the lock of my gun. "So now go home, Larry, and come up to Rathlynn in the morning."

I walked off, but the poor fellow followed me. The thought struck me that, as usual, Larry knew or meant more than he at present chose to reveal, so I faced round, and said,—

"I see, Larry, you are wide awake, and up to all that is going on. If you

know anything, do not conceal it from me."

"It is not much I know, please your honour," replied Larry; "but things are all out of joint, and I think I could put you in a way, master, to get at the sacret."

"What secret?"

"Why, what that young gintleman at the Mount is about. He was seen to enter Bridget Cooney's cabin a night or two ago, and that could be for no good purpose, anyhow."

"And who, pray, is Bridget Cooney?"

"Bridget Cooney, is it? Everybody knows Bridget. Is not she the midwife sure, who is a grate woman, and casts her eye on everybody and everything? Are not the Dhoine Shee* her friends,

* The fairies.

and cannot she tell how the Danes long ago could brew ale from heather? There's not a death but Bridget heard the warning—not a wedding she had not a hand in—not a love-whisper behind a bush that she does not hear! There's not a flower, nor a bit of grass or weed, that she does not know the power that is in it, and she can boil them up together, and so make a certain cure for love, or hatred, or jealousy. She is an awful woman, your honour, is Bridget Cooney; but she can be as mild as a May morning, and talk as soft and sweet as the breeze over the spring flowers, when she chooses."

"But, Larry, all this may be believed among the peasantry of the district, but the rich and better educated laugh at her supposed powers, of course."

"Of coorse no—it would ill become

them to laugh at Bridget, who knows all their sacrets, and lives half her time in their houses. She is just as much made of by the quality as by the poor, and I should like to see the man, or the woman either, who gives her the left shoulder."

"And what do you think young Fitzpatrick wanted with her?"

"There is some scheme afoot, and he would be after persuading her to be silent."

"Silent!—Why?"

"Because she knows all that is going on, being consulted by both sides."

"How, then, is she to be persuaded, Larry?"

"Egad! master, there's no sacret in *that.* Those that have the open hand can always open or close her mouth, and a golden key will soon unlock her

memory. Else Bridget neither sees, nor knows, nor remembers anything; and as it is not often she is tried by the golden key, she is considered safe, and so is generally trusted."

"But what good could she do me?"

"A grate deal, if she is so minded. For if she knows nothing at present, she has means to fish it all out as clane as when we net a smooth pool. Nothing escapes her. Only make a friend of her, master, in the right way, and it may go well to save your own life, and to protect your friends."

"But what could I say to her?"

"Jist the whole truth, and nothing else; say what you want, and show you are in arnest, and by the Holies you may trust her entirely."

"I don't like your advice, Larry. I have no great faith in women."

Larry groaned, and looked angry, and rubbed his shoulder nervously.

"Bad cess to me, if I am desaving your honour—it is the only way now. It is hen-hearted you are, and sorra-thing else. Sure you are not frighted at the sight of a woman?"

There was something in what the poor fellow said. I well knew the superstitious influence which their cosh-erers, their match-makers, their keeners, and their sennachies had even to this day over the ignorant population of these districts, and I had been informed that there were cases where the influence and arts of the whole of these were absorbed in those of the *midwife*.

Larry saw me hesitate.

"There is, I confess, something in what you say, Larry Lanigan," said I; "but I fear she would only betray me,

as you allow she would betray others, and then I should be worse off than before."

"How could she betray you, master, if you only asked for *her* sacrets, and told none of *your own?* You want to know what others are about, and sure you need not say exactly what you will do yourself. I'll go bail you will never repent it—only try, and there's no harum done. Find better counsel, and I'll give it up."

"But when can I see her?"

"What better time than now? The fog thickens, and you may go there at wance, and the devil a one will catch a glimpse of you."

Larry went forward cautiously, and I followed. We took the margin of the river down the stream, making our way as well as we could over rough and

uneven ground. The mist now became so thick, wafted up from the sea in dense wreaths, by the hollow blast that blew fitfully against our faces, that it was difficult to make our way at all, and every moment I expected that we must give up the attempt.

The occasion well suited the scene. To our left the waters were heard rushing headlong over the impeding rocks, or boiling in the deep hollows that received them. The whirlwind was careering above us in the mountains, and everything proclaimed a night of storm and tempest. We thus proceeded for about half an hour, when, turning short to the right, we left the river's bank, and making our way through a soft and plashy bog, we came to a rising ground, on the slope of which, about twenty yards upwards, a low thatched cabin was just visible.

"This is Bridget Cooney's," whispered Larry. "The door is on the other side, where it faces the main road. I will just go round and see that nobody is with her."

While Larry was thus reconnoitring, I debated with myself the propriety and prudence of the step I was taking. Perhaps, as he urged, it could do no harm if it could do no good, and at any rate I could keep my own designs so far secret that she could make no use of them against me. Nor did I, on consideration, see any better way of obtaining the information I wanted. Archibald had been there, and the probability was with some nefarious design.

These considerations determined me, and when Larry returned and said the coast was clear, I turned at once

round the angle of the cabin, and was about to enter.

"I will wait for you, master, here, in the turf-shed—if you want me, I shall be at hand."

I assented, opened the door, and entered. It was a characteristic scene that presented itself. The room was open to the rafters, and wreaths of smoke from a large turf fire curled round the blackened beams above. The embers threw a sullen light for a few yards round the ample fireplace —the rest of the room was in comparative darkness. On a stool in the recess of the chimney, sat a woman swaying backwards and forwards, as if composing herself to rest, and a large white cat was slumbering on the hearth.

I closed the door softly, and stood in the middle of the room. Scarcely

noticing my entrance, she continued rocking till I gave the usual salutation, —"The blessing of God be upon all in this house!"

"Amen!" replied she, looking up. "Well then, sure I was draming of you, Mr. Wyville, your honour, only last night, and I knew you were coming here. No one comes here that does not want something. But why should we talk in the dark?" and she flung a piece of bog deal on the fire, which at once illumined the place with a clear and brilliant light, —and for the first time I cast eyes on Bridget Cooney!

She was a somewhat stout and comely woman of about fifty. Her countenance, when she spoke, was strongly expressive of sagacity and cunning. Her small eyes and broad face had

the appearance of good-humour, but it was manifest that on occasion she could assume a very different aspect. She had about her all that ease which was consequent upon an avocation which introduced her into the best houses, and she knew well how to adapt her language to her company. Her costume was more than usually neat and clean for her station, and hanging to her side was a large red pincushion, the badge, possibly, of her occupation. Her knitting and a half-finished quilt were on a huge oaken dresser in the recess of the window, and the interior of this cottage exhibited altogether an air of superior neatness and comfort to most that I had seen.

Bridget rose from her stool, drew a chair near the fire, wiped it with her apron, and bade me be seated.

"Well, what is it asthore?" said she, resuming her seat. "I hope no dacent girl is in a scrape, and your honour the manes of it?"

"No—no, Bridget Cooney," replied I, hastily, "it is not to bolster up any fault of mine that I come here — it is to prevent villany, and not to solder it up."

"I see. You are afraid that the 'gra gal'—the pretty Mary D—— should come to harm? Is that it?"

"I will open my mind to you," replied I, "but on one condition—that you never use my name, or repeat to anybody one word that I say."

I slipped two gold pieces into her hand. She turned them over slowly, and I was almost afraid from her manner that my douceur was not considered handsome.

"It is not the money that I care for so much," said she, placing it in an old leathern purse; "but you have a way wid you, Mr. Wyville, that shows you are a raal gintleman. I never heard the bad word of you since you came into the counthry, and so I am willing to serve you—if I can."

"And you will never mention my name, or my business?"

"Sorra a bit. Would ye make a betrayer o' me?"

"Well then, Bridget, I will make those two sovereigns ten if by your aid I can prevent the mischief that I know is brewing against the young lady you mentioned." She nodded gravely, and I continued, — "I know that a certain young man has persecuted her with his attentions, and he was here only a few days ago."

"Archibald Fitzpatrick?"

"The same. Can you ascertain for me what he is about; or, if he has any plot, when and how it is to come off?"

"I thought you and Master Archie and all the family,—one in particular,—were as sweet and as thick as treacle?"

"Anything but that I fear just now. But what has that to do with my question?"

"This, by the same token—I am a friend to both sides, and wish both well. I ask your honor's pardon, but have you thought of the consinquinces of a quarrel with them of the Mount?"

"I have no quarrel with them if they do what is right, but I will not see a defenceless creature ill-used."

"Is it a relation you are o' these Donovans? Or, maybe you have over-

looked one I could name, and are pulling a string with the 'thackeen thackeen' o' Ballybog? And it's the sweet girl she is entirely."

"Never mind Bridget Cooney," said I, somewhat impatiently; "if you are so much of a friend to the people at the Mount that you cannot assist me, only say so at once, and I will wish you good night."

Bridget did not answer, but turned her head as if listening to some sound outside. I was about again to speak when she suddenly rose.

"Bee thee husth,"* said she, motioning with her hand; "some one comes you will not wish to see—go behind the turf-rick, and take a seat wid you. It may be a long sitting."

I now heard the tramp of a horse's

* "Be silent."

feet, and hastily ensconced myself where she had pointed out. It was a thorough concealment, though I could, by leaning towards the right hand, occasionally command the whole area of the room. The bog-wood no longer shot up its steady blaze, but the embers gave a ruddy and tempered light to the place. Bridget resumed her former position and sat rocking as before on her stool, when the door was cautiously opened, and a female figure muffled in a large hooded cloak half entered, and pausing, seemed to be scrutinizing the gloomy apartment.

"Are you alone, Bridget?" said a female voice, which I had no difficulty in recognizing.

"Here I am, acushla," replied the midwife. "Is it for shelter ye come in here from the fog?"

"Don't you know me, Bridget?" said

the female, advancing towards the fire.

"May the Lord be wid me!" ejaculated Bridget, as if in surprise. "Sure it is Miss Florence, my own chorra-machree. And what has brought you here through the fog, my darling? Sure it's not the black news, and you looking so fresh and so handsome, blessed be God!"

"It is only to ask a question, Bridget Cooney, and one I know you can answer if you will."

"But why come on such a day as this? Aren't you afeared o' the dark night coming on, and the good people that are abroad and screetching in the wind? You had always a stout heart, Miss—there's not a gossoon in the barony would put his nose out of doors this night, let alone a delicate young lady. But let me take off your cloak and give you a sate, dear, close to the fire, for

it's shivering you must be entirely."

Florence sat down, but folded her cloak closer around her. As she stood her form appeared to me larger and fuller than usual, and as I caught for a moment the expression of her countenance it seemed pale and working with some strong emotion.

"Bridget Cooney," said she, "did not you bring me into the world and nurse me, and were not my young sorrows often hushed to rest on your bosom?"

"My soul to happiniss, darlin', but that's thrue of you—but what then?"

"Would you see me betrayed and ill-used, if you could lift but a finger to help me?"

"I would not, sure; but how is it, ma'am, is it the scalded heart you have got? Och hone, Miss Florence, why do you let the tears down?"

"I am foolish to allow it to affect me so, but if I have a proud heart I have a soft one too. Oh Bridget, I am very unhappy. You are the only creature in the world I would expose myself to. I fear you are the only one now who loves me."

The cosherer did not speak, but rocked backwards and forwards on her stool. My sensations were anything but pleasant. I was in a wrong position—had I any right thus to entrap the confidence of any one, much less of Florence Fitzpatrick? If I could have reached the door unobserved I would have made my escape, but that was impossible, and after what had already passed in my presence a discovery would have been awkward and painful in the extreme. I felt that I had no way but to remain quiet, trusting to the woman her-

self to manage matters for the best.

"I know I may trust you with anything, Bridget," resumed Florence, "for you have been next to a mother to me, and you know all our concerns at the Mount, and you are a distant cousin to the Corrigans, to whom we shall be closely allied you know, ere long, by my brother's marriage."

"Master Archie will never marry Julia Corrigan," interposed the midwife, solemnly.

"He shall, he must," said Florence, passionately. "It is partly on this account I am here, and I chose such a time as this because for worlds I would not he should know I had seen you. Something must be done, and soon, and you alone can do it, Bridget Cooney."

"Then make a clane breast of it, darlin'," said the midwife, coaxingly, "and let me know how it is wid you, and if

I can give you a hand, how should you doubt it?"

"I will do so then," said Florence, in a voice half choked with emotion, "though I know I am foolish, and suffer my feelings to get the better of my pride. But let us fasten the door, I would not for the world we were overheard or disturbed."

She rose and went to the door, passing close to the place where I was concealed. My heart beat audibly. She drew the bolt and resumed her seat.

"You know then, Bridget," said she, "that there is a family residing at Ballybog?"

"Of coorse I do — but what of them?"

"That family is the heart-canker to me. Whichever way I turn they are the stumbling block. You know what I

mean, nurse—one of them is ever crossing my path—the young woman."

"Mary Donovan, honey, and a gra gal she is; but how can she cross *your* path? She seems quiet enough if people would let her alone, and it's the good daughter she is to a half crazy, doting old man. What of her?"

"Don't mock me, Bridget Cooney. You know more than you pretend, she does cross me and mine in every way she can—but I will stop it. She must be got rid of in any way short of murder. She shall not stop here; if she does, it will be too hot for her.

"And how does she cross you, darlin'? Unlock your heart, and let me see into it. Is it in love she crosses you?"

"I will tell you more if you will answer the question I came to ask. Does that gentleman,—that person, I mean, he

who lives at Rathlynn,—does he go often to Ballybog?" Florence dropped her voice into a half-whisper, "Tell me, nurse, for I have a reason."

"Come, Miss Florence, you are jealous; speak out, and own it now."

"If you will give me the information," said Florence, "I will leave you to guess the reason."

"Well then, Miss Florence, acushla, he does go there, and often. Is it under a promise he is to *you?*"

"Oh, no, no, Bridget — not that. You know that he is wooing the girl, —is it not so?"

"I know nothing about it further than I have told you. He does go there often, but why, and you so fond of him, bothers me. Yet it is not often that young men walk five miles over the mountains, in all weathers, without

some partickler purpose, is it, darlin'?"

There was now a long pause. Florence hid her face in the hood of her cloak, and was perfectly still.

The midwife sedulously heaped black turf on the fire, so as to darken the room still more.

"And now, nurse," said Florence, with an effort, "to my special business with you. For my brother's sake you must help us to rid the country of this girl, and for the sake of Julia Corrigan."

"And for your own sake too, and for the sake of him, the forriner who lives at Rathlynn. Miss Florence, you love him—I know you do. How happy you were when seated beside him in the boat, and when you walked together by the waterfall, and when——"

"Stop, nurse, for pity's sake say no

more. I do not blame him—I do not hate him yet; but if he—if he thinks of that low peasant girl at Ballybog, hate him I shall! She *must* leave the country."

"It is hard to turn people out of stone walls. Only wait, and be quiet, and it will be done for you. In a month's time, she will be gone—so be asy, and wait your time."

"You mean that Archie and she have made it up to run off together—is that what you mean?"

"Not quite that, and not very different."

"Oh! nurse, if I only could feel assured that she returned Archibald's love, I should be happy. As to his eloping with her, that may be prevented. My father will see to that when he knows—and know he shall. Then you

think, dear, good Bridget, she loves my brother?"

"I cannot tell—she may or she may not; but surely, unless it was so, she would not consent to go, and go she will, if not prevented. That I do know."

"Well," said Florence, rising to go, "I hate her, and she shall know how much ere long. If father, mother, brother, sister are the sacrifice, go she must, and she shall learn what it is to stand in the way of a Fitzpatrick!"

She rose to her full height, and stood like a Sybil, half revealed by the flickering flame of the fire.

"Good night, nurse," at length she murmured, in a softer key, "and thank you for your information. Now do not disturb yourself," for the cosherer was hurrying to the door, "I left my pony

fastened to the gate. Good night!"

"Good night, achora," said Bridget, as she closed the door, "bannaght lhath, my blessing be with you."

The sound of her horse's hoofs had some time died away ere I ventured to emerge from my concealment.

"Well, your honor," said Bridget, "have you not been put in the way of getting all the information you want, and perhaps a little more?"

She looked me full in the face with one of those arch Hibernian twinkles of the eye, better to be felt and understood than to be described. I was too much agitated and abashed to reply.

"Remember now," continued she, "that *I* have told you nothing—it is no fault of mine if you know these sacrets—don't forget *that* Mr. Wyville,

your honor. You see—I like people to tell their own stories, and if you hear them, well it's no fault of mine."

"But you induced Miss Fitzpatrick to speak out more than she otherwise would. It would break her proud heart if she knew I was a listener."

"Which she never will know, if you do not tell her."

"You see Bridget, there is an intention both on the brother's and the sister's side to injure that young woman. How are we to protect her?"

"Keep your own counsel, and leave that to me. I shall know what is going on, and if anything is on hands I will send. I hope it is the stout heart you have, Mr. Wyville, for ye've been busy sowing to the wind. I wonder why you stir up such a storm, and all for that colleen beg up the

Lake, when you might have Miss Florence herself, who is altogether an out-and-out lady."

"And what do *you* know about the colleen beg," said I. "Is *she* not a lady?"

"She's an angel to look at, for I've seen her wonst, but as for her edication or family I cannot say. *No* ginteel folks would live at Ballybog, I'm a-thinking."

"But I have no intention of marrying any one, Bridget, at present, and I assure you my interference in this matter is from mere pity."

"Pity, is it? Well, we shall see. When pity and a pretty face come together, love is not far off. But that's no concern of mine. They are violent people those Fitzpatricks, and though I have nursed both brother and sister

there was never the open hand nor yet the civil tongue in that house, except from Miss Florence."

I now rose to go.

"Then I may depend upon you, Bridget? If you do serve me in this matter I will not be ungrateful—so good night."

"Musha! never fear. May the Lord guard your honor, and the good night to you kindly."

CHAPTER V.

"Your daughter; what a stir's here wi' y'r daughter."
Beaumont and Fletcher.

It was the morning after this—to me distressing—interview, that I was loitering in the front of the lodge and enjoying the calm morning air, as it came wafted over the Lough from the mountains, when I perceived Mr. Fitzpatrick slowly approaching the house. Though there was nothing unusual in this, yet at the present moment I must confess the presence of any other person would have been more agreeable.

As it was, I slowly walked to meet him. His manner, however, was reassuring; he shook me heartily by the hand, made some remarks on the weather, and without invitation marched forward into my parlour, and there seated himself. I, of course, inquired after the family in my usual style, and was perfectly willing to hope it was a mere friendly visit to while away time. But he did not suffer me to lie under this delusion long.

"I have called, Mr. Wyville, this morning, for some explanation, for it is well such near neighbours as we are should perfectly understand each other." I bowed, feeling anything but comfortable, and almost guessing the *dénouement* of this formal commencement. "I have observed that there has been some coolness of late between my son Archie and

you, and I will be glad to know the reason; I dare say I can make matters right again. Come—come—say how is it?"

"You must inquire of your son for an explanation on this point," said I. "I have no quarrel with him that I am aware of."

"I am glad of that anyhow," replied Mr. Fitzpatrick, "for quarrels in this country are better avoided, and, indeed circumstanced as you are with my family, quarrels would be out of place. Of course, you feel that."

"Quarrels should be avoided everywhere and anywhere," said I; "and certainly inasmuch as we are neighbours, any misunderstanding with my friends at the Mount will be carefully avoided by me."

"Is it merely because we are neigh-

bours then—is there no better, no stronger reason, Mr. Wyville? Am I to understand this is the only tie that binds us together?"

"Certainly. I am not aware, sir, of any other."

"Mr. Fitzpatrick threw himself back in his chair and dug his hands deep into his breeches pockets, sternly regarding me through his bristly eyebrows.

"There are subjects," resumed he, at length, "too delicate for a father to enlarge upon, and there is a subject upon which a young woman would rather die than submit to a discussion of this nature; yet, as a father, I feel bound to interfere, and you must pardon me if I ask you a question or two connected with the subject. Is it true, Mr. Wyville, that you spend much of your time at Ballybog in company with that low

young woman who resides there with her father?"

I felt indignant at this impertinence, and a long silence ensued.

"I wait for an answer," at length said he, rising and drawing himself up to his full height, "and an answer I must have."

"You will have no answer from me, sir," replied I, "on such a subject as this, till you can prove that you have a right to ask it."

"Then you give me to understand, young man, that you disavow all connection with any member of my family further than being neighbours and acquaintances?"

"Most certainly I do, and I must express my surprise at the liberty you are taking in thus addressing me."

"Liberty I am taking? Egad, young fellow, I will take further liberties with

you by-and-by, which will be far from agreeable I can assure you, if you do not think better of it. Now, sir, I offer you my friendship or my enmity—you know what I mean. Be the man of honour you pretend to be, and I doubt not are—do the right thing by the family—and you will not find firmer, faster friends in all Ulster than the Fitzpatricks; but if you have been playing the fool for your own amusement only, by all the powers of hell you shall repent it." He struck the table violently, as if he would shiver it to atoms. "So now I wish you a good morning, and I hope when we next meet it will be to prove yourself a man of honour and to offer the hand of friendship, and something more. You understand?"

He stalked off, leaving me to my reflections.

And so both Larry and the cosherer were right. Breakers were indeed ahead, and the whirlwind was not far off. Mr. Fitzpatrick, however, had reckoned without his host—he had not intimidated me. I rather felt indignant at his Hibernian impudence, his want of common delicacy and prudence. He had evidently mistaken his man, and this trick was too stale to affect me in anywise, as he doubtless intended. But, nevertheless, it was very disagreeable—most provoking. I had in reality done nothing to warrant such conduct, and I felt proudly conscious that few in my situation could have acted more prudently or cautiously. The somewhat equivocal situations I had been thrown into were either brought about by mere chance, or had been created by Florence herself, and on reflection I gave myself

some credit for withstanding temptations of no ordinary kind; for, in sober truth, Florence was a fine, attractive girl, and I had felt a sincere regard for her. And now—what a subject of self-congratulation that I had checked my feelings in time—that I had not allowed the Syren to charm me into a connection which, notwithstanding the merits of the lady herself, could have produced nothing but misery and unhappiness to both! To be the son-in-law of Mr. Fitzpatrick, the brother of Archibald—to that not an angel could reconcile me. The father a bully—the son a reprobate! How best to meet this imbroglio was now the question.

My father had an adage, "In face of a perplexity sleep a night;" and I therefore resolved to defer taking any step consequent on Mr. Fitzpatrick's

call till another day. But I felt uneasy and unfitted for any regular employment, so I resolved to take my gun, cross the Lough, and shoot my way to Ballybog. Why not? Was I not a free agent? If conscience whispered any remonstrance, I did not or would not hear it. I felt irresistibly drawn to that wild spot, and anywhere else I should be restless and unhappy. And yet with all this I fancied myself free as air—there was no temptation in the form of woman I could not overcome. The Admiral's injunction was strong and binding as ever, and as I walked lightly over the heath I felt it to be so. I saw birds and my dogs acted well, but I had but indifferent success; my sight seemed to sympathize with my feelings, both were out of order. I shot a fox, however, that crossed my path skulking off

with a rabbit, and I could not but hail it as a good omen. There were human foxes who coveted delicate morsels, and they richly deserved the like fate.

On attaining the ridge that overlooked the house, to my surprise I saw Mr. Donovan and his daughter slowly returning home from a walk. I hastened to join them. Mary greeted me with so kind a smile that it set my heart a-beating, and Mr. Donovan received me with more than usual animation. It was manifestly one of his best days, and his daughter was more than usually happy.

"We have been talking on the subject of Irish antiquities, Mr. Wyville," said he, smiling, as he supported himself on my arm. "Mary is inclined to be incredulous, and will not allow that Ireland was ever an 'Island of Saints.' She does not exactly say so in words, but it is manifest that

to denominate it 'the Island of Sinners' would be more correct in her opinion."

The old man laughed at the conceit.

"I was only arguing, dear father," said Mary, gaily, "that as there never did exist such a man as St. Patrick, so the other Saints may be mere fictions also."

"Never exist such a man as St. Patrick?" said I, in surprise; "to say that is almost to assert that the existence of Ireland itself is a fiction."

"And still," said Mr. Donovan, "Mary is not far wrong. There is nothing in Usher, Camden, or even in those most fabulous of all writers, the Martyrologists, to prove his existence satisfactorily. Bede never mentions the conversion of Ireland by a Roman missionary, nor does he record anything about the ecclesiastical powers wielded and the miracles performed by this fictitious personage. Even at that early period of the Church there

were no such traditions. The Irish, as is proved by the famous letter of Laurence, Bishop of Canterbury, to the Bishops and Abbots of Ireland in the year 604, allow that the Irish Church was not only *not* Roman Catholic, but, on the contrary, was violently opposed to the Augustine or Saxon Church. 'Bishop Dangan,' says Laurence, 'not only refused to eat with us, but even to take any repast in the same house.' So that it is manifest if there was a St. Patrick at all, he was a Protestant, for the Irish Church was most vehement in opposing Romish innovations, at the very period that this renowned Saint was supposed to flourish. Besides, there seems no agreement among early authors as to whom he was or where he was born." *

* Harris says that St. Patrick was a North Briton, born at Kilpatrick, A.D. 372. Baronius and Floriligus say he was a native of Ireland; O'Sullivan maintains that he was

"And what does Father Roche say to this?" said I, laughing.

"Very little; only, indeed, the old argument, that he pities our want of faith, and that holy things are not to be handled in a controversial manner, &c."

"You will discover, Mr. Wyville, by this time that we are not Roman Catholics," said Mary, "and to that we must attribute the fact that our relative, Father Roche, so seldom visits us. My mother was his distant relative, we had therefore some right to apply to him in our distress."

born in Brittany; another claims him for Cornwall, and not a few declare he was a Welshman. Dr. Talbot, the titular Archbishop of Dublin, sums up the argument in these remarkable words:—"St. Patrick was neither Archbishop, Primate, nor Metropolitan. His pall is chimerical, made of goat's wool, and flies through the air, sewn to the reliques of St. Stephen, the proto-martyr." Dr. Talbot was a very learned antiquarian and a Roman Catholic. So runs the argument. I form no opinion on the matter.

"He appears liberal in his ideas," I observed, "and is manifestly one of that small section among Irish ecclesiastics that wish to reduce both their systems of faith and government to a more popular form."

When we reached the house we sat under the rude porch, continuing our discourse much in the same strain. It was obvious to me that Mr. Donovan was well read both in science and theology, and that he had made Ireland his peculiar study, both with regard to her moral and her physical condition. But under the influence of his complaint, his mind was much impaired, and it was only at very short intervals that his intellect blazed forth like the last flickerings of an expiring lamp. His imagination sometimes rambled into the most improbable regions and his delusions on

the subject of science almost reached the philosopher's stone.

Producing a small coin from his pocket he placed it in my hand, and bade me scrutinize it. The obverse was a head helmeted, the reverse a cross, the legend "Isarus Re Dyflin."

"The date of this is as early as the ninth century," said he, "when Sihtric, the Dane, settled in Dublin. It is manifest, therefore, that minerals were discovered and used here at a very early period. As to the mineral wealth of this country I have always had but one opinion, that it is enormous. I hope to prove that to my own advantage, if I can only recover my strength. In many of the streams flowing from the mountains gold abounds, and in Tyrone and Wicklow astonishing discoveries have been made. The existence of gold in

these brooks proves there must be a rich matrix somewhere, but there has been neither energy nor science applied to the subject, and hence no results. The rocks are, no doubt, impregnated with this precious metal; surely, it may be extracted by some chemical appliance? I have long turned my attention to this subject, nor am I far from success."

"My dear father," said Mary, kindly, "the air blows chill from the bogs, and a snow-storm hangs on the mountains. Let us go in; Mr. Wyville will excuse us—you must rest after your walk."

The old man, who was evidently buried in some reverie, mechanically obeyed, and was led by his daughter to his usual place, an armed chair by the fire side. She beckoned me not to leave.

I sauntered about the lawn till she appeared tripping lightly over the turf in her blue cloak. Her face beamed like the moon through a dark canopy of clouds. She certainly was beautiful in her very artlessness, and Bridget Cooney had truly named her the "gra gal" of Ballybog.

I know not how it was, but with all my admiration of Mary Donovan, respect for her character was a predominating feeling. It was strange to find a mere child of nature—an Irish maid of the mountains—in manners, in decorum, in strong sense and fine feeling, equal to the most refined and educated in my own country. She could have had no advantages beyond what she had derived from her father, for she had informed me that but little of a mother's care had she ever known. He certainly had

been in a certain sense an accomplished, well-read man, but at present, at least, he seemed more intent upon his own wild schemes in developing the powers of science, than in imparting to his daughter the usual requisites of what is called a good education.

And yet, what might be Mary Donovan's acquirements I had no opportunity of judging—for, strange to say, she never entered upon the subject of female accomplishments, from which I inferred that she was conscious of not possessing them. And indeed, how should she? And the question suggested itself to me at this time, as it has doubtless often done to others, "whether accomplishments are necessary adjuncts to domestic happiness?" I was almost inclined to think not, for observation taught me that these things were either laid aside amid domestic

cares or interfered with by them. Had Mary Donovan been very accomplished I might probably have thought differently, so much are our opinions governed by our affections.

"It was to ask your advice, Mr. Wyville," said she, "that I wished you to remain here a little. Perhaps you would not object to my walking with you part of the way to Flynn's cottage, as that will be on your route?"

We set out, walking along leisurely. It was a sublime scene by which we were surrounded. Snow had fallen during the night, and the tops of the mountains were white and dazzling as they cut the clear blue sky. The sun was now verging towards the horizon, and had already sunk below the high range to the westward of us. But his parting rays yet touched the more dis-

tant heights with crimson, and the placid bosom of the Lough reflected deep and clear the jutting crags and leafless woods that now darkened on its margin. It was just a scene to awaken the feelings and arouse the imagination. And to have Mary Donovan at my side —that completed the fascination!

I know not how it was, but I felt supremely happy. We talked gaily as we sauntered along. Mary was delighted with the apparent improvement in her father's health, and in his returning intelligence.

"For months he has not been so much himself as he was to-day," said she, her countenance glowing with delight. "From this gleam you may imagine what he was in the full daylight of his intellect. Over-eagerness in the pursuit of, I fear, unattainable ends,

and the consequent disappointments, have brought on his malady; else he was, as you may judge even from his present appearance, of patriarchal mould and strength."

I listened with surprise, as I had often done before. Was this the language of a simple country girl? But what else was that fair, untutored being, who now trod the earth by my side with the lightness of a fairy and the grace of a queen? Her father had been a man of wit and learning, and continual association with him had refined her language and elevated her ideas. In no other way could I account for it.

As we wandered along, thus conversing, both Mary and I seemed to have forgotten the alleged purpose of her walk, till we arrived at that well-known

spot where I had found her seated after the strange *rencontre* with Archibald Fitzpatrick. This seemed to recall her to herself. She paused, leaned against the rock, and for some moments contemplated in silence the lovely and striking scene before us. I stood by her side without attempting to disturb hermeditations.

"Is it not strange," at length she said, as if half addressing herself—"is it not strange that, with all my eagerness and desire to leave this country, yet its charms, like a spell, still hang about my heart? And," continued she, turning to me, "it is upon this subject that I would speak to you. Your kindness my father and I can never forget, and we would not willingly take any step without apprising and consulting you."

She paused, and I waited silently for her to go on.

"After the event that occurred near this spot, and of which you were yourself the witness, I feel that there is no protection for us here. That young man, I know, still pursues his schemes, more quietly perhaps, but not the less steadily. Yourself excepted, we have not one friend on whom we can rely, and I know also, and lament that your generous interference has brought you too into danger. That of itself would have decided us. We intend secretly to convey ourselves away, and in that you can render us the last service we shall ever require at your hands." The tear glistened in the poor girl's eyes, and, one escaping, rested like a jewel on her fair and blushing cheek.

"And where do you intend to go?" said I, half choked with an emotion that I vainly strove to control; "why not

remain?—I will guarantee your safety."

She shook her head, and her eyes sought the ground.

"Every consideration, Mr. Wyville, urges our flight, and I were indeed wanting in the proper spirit of my sex, and common discretion, did I consent to remain in a position where my sole chance of protection was from a comparative stranger like yourself. No! My father is much better—he may be quite restored—I have resolved to fly while I can. Will you assist us?"

"Nothing you require shall be undone," I replied, sorrowfully; "but how can I aid you?"

"By kindly accompanying us as far as Letterkenny—then we can have no fear."

"And what is your destination afterwards?"

"New Brunswick, in North America. My mother's friends reside there, and would take us in gladly. I regret we ever left them."

"New Brunswick! North America?" repeated I, filled with astonishment, and a feeling deeper still, which I was not willing to recognize. "Impossible! your father would never travel so far, and if he was taken ill, what could you do alone, and among strangers."

"All this I know," replied she, firmly; "but there is no alternative. We must trust in Him who alone can protect the poor and the unfortunate. We are quite resolved."

"But, dear Mary—Miss Donovan!" exclaimed I, hastily, surprised and shocked by this sudden announcement, "have you no one to leave behind who cares for you—who loves you?"

She looked me steadily in the face, as if her clear, expressive eye would penetrate the secret of my heart.

"No one," said she, mournfully; "no one at least who—" she burst into tears, and hid her face in her hands.

I was deeply affected. That we should part had now become to me as a thing impossible. The truth flashed upon me in overwhelming force—I loved Mary Donovan devotedly, she was irrevocably fixed in my heart of hearts!

As the poor girl's agitation did not subside at once, I stood by silent and abstracted. The cold maxims of prudence began to present themselves slowly to my mind; but when she turned, the sight of her beauty and her distress, drove them all away, and with a sudden impulse I had no power to resist, I seized her hand, and carrying it to my

lips, I boldly and freely gave vent to every feeling of my heart.

Mary stood silent and confused, as neither knowing what to do nor what to say. She did not repulse — but neither by word nor action did she encourage me.

"I am decided and open in my language, Miss Donovan," said I, regaining the hand she had gently withdrawn, "because our circumstances demand it. Only say you return my affection, or even allow me to hope that you will in time, and I shall then feel a right to protect you; and protect you I will as tenderly, as devotedly as if I were a brother, or more! Your present circumstances put the usual considerations out of the question—only say, then, that you will weigh the subject in your mind, and I

will urge you no further at present."

It was some time before she was calm enough to speak, and then throwing her eyes upon me with a look brimful of gratitude, at least, if of no warmer feeling, she said,—

"I did not expect this, Mr. Wyville, — indeed I did not, though I know well your generous nature. But your total disregard of self is no argument why I should forget my duty. Had our circumstances been different — had I moved in your sphere—had I been circumstanced otherwise from what I am—what has now passed I will candidly confess ought neither to have pained nor grieved me. But I have learned to look my duty steadily in the face, and my duty to you is clear. We must not discourse thus again. Be our friend — our counsellor

— our deliverer, and never fear being forgotten, or that your kindness will pass out of our minds. When we are far away, and present excitement is gone, you will feel that mine has been the proper course, and that my best way to show my gratitude will be to save you from yourself."

She held out her hand, which I took eagerly and again pressed to my lips, and bounding lightly up the hill she quickly disappeared.

"May peace be ever with thee, sweet girl!" I exclaimed, as turning slowly I bent my steps homewards.

CHAPTER VI.

"And by the hollow whistling in the leaves,
Foretells a tempest and a blustering day."
Henry IV. (1*st Part*).

As I walked rapidly across the mountain homewards I pondered deeply on what had passed. Surprise and admiration at the conduct of Mary Donovan possessed every feeling, and I marvelled less at my own weakness than at her fortitude and good sense. She had taught me a lesson of self-denial, which I was almost ashamed to acknowledge, and when I was driven by the impetu-

ous impulse of my own feelings to forget my promise to my father, and to invite a connection which might have terminated unhappily for both, her better judgment had checked the torrent, and recalled me to myself.

But the contemplation of her conduct under so many scenes of trial was not calculated to abate that fever of love which had so suddenly—as I falsely thought—sprung up in my breast. Indeed, reflection only increased it, and I resolved to take myself to task—to keep down this new-born passion, and to act henceforward as if I, indeed, knew that a union with the fair recluse at Ballybog was impracticable.

And so indeed it was—for in the first place my friends would never consent to it, and, secondly, I felt convinced that Mary Donovan would never

enter any family clandestinely. Had she consulted her ambition or worldly interest, and accepted my overtures, what would have been my position? Honour would forbid me to withdraw, and I must have faced all the evil consequences of so imprudent a step. Would Florence Fitzpatrick have thus acted? It was an unmanly thought, and I flung it from me—why should I draw comparisons?—Florence had never offended me.

Thus ruminating, I hurried on, passed the Weir, and arrived at Rathlynn just as the chilly north wind careered in hollow murmurs among the trees, and large flakes of snow fell thickly, softly, and noiselessly on the already whitened earth.

I found Mrs. Doran in my room as I entered. She closed the door, first

ascertaining that Nelly was busily engaged in the kitchen.

"A slip of a gorsoon has been here with a note," said she, in a half whisper; "but he would not leave it—he said he would wait till your honour came home, and he is now in the thick of the plantation, as if he did not wish to be seen. Shall I call him in, or ask him for the note?"

I paused. What could it mean?

"You may let him in, Mrs. Doran," at length I said; "I will see him myself."

It was not long before the boy appeared, and I soon recognized one of those bold, active little imps that had so amused me near the school-house, when I first made my appearance in the country.

The urchin came forward—had the

coolness to close the door after him, and presented me with a note.

"Who gave you this?" said I.

"I know nothink about it," was the reply; and the lad was making his bow and retiring.

"You know surely from whom you received it?"

"The note, is it? I know nothink about it. She was a forriner."

"Oh! a woman was it?"

"Yes; I never saw her before—she gave me twopence, and said she'd wait till I came back."

"Then I will go with you, and speak to her."

"It's of no use—she'll be off if your honour leaves the house."

"How do you know?"

"She said so."

The boy suddenly made his exit, and

I called for candles to read this strangely conveyed epistle. I well knew it was of no use whatever to pump the boy; how cunning and adroit they are, is best known to those who have heard them cross-examined in a court of justice.

Mrs. Doran entered with candles.

"I hope there's nothing wrong?" said she, looking anxious. "Nelly and I think your honour is away from home a good deal, and if, as is very natural in young gentlemen, you are looking after any young woman, I would have you be cautious, for maybe she's the very one that would lead you to hurt."

This advice was doubtless well meant, and therefore I could not be angry.

"What is it that makes you have any suspicion?" I inquired.

"Only just this. Nelly was at the Patthern, at Scrimbhrogue, it was the

day before yesterday, and Tim Corcoran told her that he heard a man inquiring about you of the schoolmaster. I have been told he's a Ribbonman, and Tim thought it looked black."

"Who is a Ribbonman?—the schoolmaster?"

"Lord love you, sir, I did not say so much as that — I only said people whispered it; but for the world you must not say a syllable about it. If you are interfaring in the country, no matter in what, harm is sure to come of it. From what Nelly said I am mortal sure that there's something stirring."

"Thank you, Mrs. Doran," said I; "and as I am not, as you seem to suspect, 'looking after any young woman,' at least in the sense you seem to infer, I hope I may escape a visit from those infernal scoundrels you mention."

"Hushth!" said she, in a voice of alarm. "May the Lord preserve you! for it's a good man you are to us all, and sorry will we be that any harm should come across you."

"Never fear, Mrs. Doran," said I; "I am wide awake; and as I wish to benefit and not to injure the people, surely there is no cause why I should fear."

"That's neither here nor there in this country," replied the housekeeper; "they would murther an angel of mercy if he crossed them. The very man that takes your alms and blesses you on his knees in the morning, will run a knife across your throat in the evening. Oh, young sir, you do not know them as I do! Only be careful and mind what I say, and may the good Lord preserve you in your going out and your coming in!"

I opened the note when Mrs. Doran was gone. It was clumsily but securely sealed, and had no address outside. It ran thus, and was written in a feigned hand:

"Syr—If you valu yer lyfe, avoyd Ballybog. I only spake what I kno. From a frend."

Long and keenly did I scrutinize this precious document, for a suspicion flashed across my mind as to its author. But there was no internal evidence, only that the paper was not such as a common person would use, and that the handwriting and the orthography were manifestly feigned. As I ever held anonymous communications in contempt, I was about to throw it into the fire, when the thought crossed my mind that it might be of consequence at some future time. I accordingly secured it in a secret drawer of my desk.

I retired to rest, but not to sleep. I felt that I was in a critical, if not a wrong position in the country, and I entered upon a severe scrutiny of my past conduct—whether it might not have been avoided. Perhaps it might—but only by repulsing the offered friendship of Florence Fitzpatrick, and by abstaining from all intercourse with the family at Ballybog. But was I called upon by any moral, or even prudential motives so to act in either case? I did not feel that I was—indeed, neither as a gentleman nor as a Christian could I have acted otherwise than I had done.

It was unfortunate things had taken this turn—but what then? I must meet the emergency as became a man who had the approval of his own conscience. With regard to the future a new scheme suggested itself. It was not well for a

stranger like myself to stand alone in the country. I therefore, after much and anxious thought, resolved to call at Doonore, to narrate, in confidence, all these events to Colonel D'Arcie, and to seek his advice and assistance.

No sooner said than done. I arose early, and, accompanied by "the boys," and Larry Lanigan, I rowed up the Lough on my mission. As I passed the Mount, I saw Florence standing close to the water's edge. I raised my hat and saluted her. For one moment she seemed gazing at us intently, and then, turning away, without acknowledging my salutation, she walked slowly out of view.

I cannot say but that my heart smote me; and a look of mortification, and almost of anger, that Larry threw upon me, did not abate my feelings of irritation. Florence was manifestly a favour-

ite with Larry, and the poor fellow had done not a little to bring us together.

"Sure your honour would not marry a frieze cloak," said he to me, one day, "when you can have the silk gown and trinkets. Egad! and Miss Florence is the jewel of Ulster—let alone her grate family that came ower with the Danes, anyhow."

I found the family at home at Doonore, and after half an hour's lively chat with the young ladies, was admitted into the Colonel's *sanctum*. With so solemn a gravity did he listen to my details of what had transpired, that I felt somewhat nervous and uneasy as to the result. He did not interrupt my narrative by any sign of acquiescence or any queries, but remained perfectly quiescent, till I had finished. A long

silence then ensued. He looked thoughtful and serious, and at length coolly observed that the matters I had detailed, though frivolous in themselves, might lead to disagreeable consequences.

"Now, on consideration, Mr. Wyville, I cannot blame you, but had I had the pleasure of being earlier in your confidence, I might have counselled you better. The quarrel with the Fitzpatricks will be, to say the least of it, troublesome, and you will require all the courage and firmness you possess to meet their bullying. I beg their pardon, but there is no better word as applied to them. With regard to the young woman at Ballybog, I am inclined to think that there is some scheme on foot. If there is, Bridget Cooney will know it, and you have done well to make friends with her.

It is certainly a curious fact that persons in her station should possess the influence they certainly have acquired—but so it is, and her great intimacy with both high and low, in consequence of her vocation, assists the delusion. But do not trust her implicitly—learn all you can purchase from her cupidity, but be silent as to your own plans, and your best mode of action is to seem as if you were guided solely by her. The Fitzpatricks, I may tell you in confidence, are tottering on the verge of ruin, and they will make a struggle to enforce your assumed engagement to Florence. A little English capital and connection would greatly assist them, no doubt. Mr. Fitzpatrick has had this in his eye all along; but as I never saw you pay any very marked attention to Florence, I could not take

the liberty of putting you on your guard. She is, moreover, a fine, intelligent girl, and I do not think it would in any case have been my province to interfere. There may now be some violent proceedings attempted—if you feel advice or assistance necessary, come to me. I am obliged by your confidence, and will consider well what is best to be done—in the meanwhile, notwithstanding the threat you have received, keep your eye on Ballybog."

When I rejoined the ladies, I felt happier, and more easy in my thoughts, and better able to resist their badinage than before my interview with their didactic parent.

"You never row up the Lough now?" said Miss Susan; "it is no use looking out for you, even if we felt inclined, which we do not."

"Oh! Mr. Wyville has deserted the lake for the mountain," said Miss Fanny, "they say he is *so* fond of shooting, and having killed all worth killing on the east side of the Lough, he is now clearing out the west; they say, too, he meets with every variety of game."

"And what weapon does he use?" rejoined Miss Susan; "I suppose the long bow — that kills more game than any other weapon I know of."

"No, not the long bow," said Miss Fanny, looking archly at me; "it is the bow of a little, blind, mischievous boy called Cupid. He has been (so we are told) very successful with that instrument both on the eastern and western sides of the lake. Is it true, Mr. Wyville?"

"Quite true," replied I, laughing, "and as you allow me to be in posses-

sion of the bow, take care that the next arrows do not hit yourselves."

"We don't fear," said Susan; "an arrow without a barb is not dangerous, even though shot from Cupid's bow. Besides, we are armed at all points, so you may try your skill as soon as you please. I can tell you beforehand you will miss your aim."

"Perhaps not. There is danger in over-confidence," replied I.

"In our case not," said Miss Fanny; "for a true Cupid's bow only aims one shaft at one victim. It is enough, or ought to be, for the highest ambition to pierce one heart. Oh, Mr. Wyville! yours is not a true Cupid's bow, it is one borrowed from Apollo, who shoots his rays everywhere."

"What nonsense is all this?" said the Colonel, who was just entering the room.

"We are only congratulating Mr. Wyville on his great success in shooting," said Susan.

"And well you may," replied the Colonel, gravely, "for we benefit by it to a great extent."

Susan was tempted to pursue the subject, but a prohibitory look from her more prudent sister restrained her.

"By-the-bye, Wyville," said the Colonel, "you will spend Christmas Day with us. We shall meet at church in the morning, and then we can find you a place in the car to Doonore, as Mrs. D'Arcie will not deem it prudent to expose herself to the cold."

I thanked the Colonel, accepted the invitation, and, after luncheon, rowed across the Lough to Ballybog. After what had transpired at our last meeting, I was anxious to see Mary Dono-

van, and to show her that I had tutored my feelings into that state of rational quiescence of which she had, indeed, set me so noble an example.

As my boat rapidly cut the blue surface of the waters, I fell unconsciously into a comparison between the fair inhabitant of Mount Patrick and the humble recluse of Ballybog.

Florence was one of the order of fine women — tall, and well-formed. Her manner grave and reserved — her hair raven-black — her eye dark, searching, and expressive. But when she unbent, which was seldom, she had a bewitching smile, and her glances were soft and tender. And these had an additional attraction from the contrast with her general manner, for nothing is more flattering to a man's vanity than that she who was haughty and indifferent to

others, should smile upon him. As she did not speak much, and then with deliberation, she had the credit of being clever, and having generally a perfect command over her feelings, she acquired a character of quiescence and good temper quite equal to her deserts. In fact, she was just one of those women who, under ordinary circumstances, would be much admired and followed, and whose smiles, like the sun's rays in northern climes, are the more coveted and enjoyed from their scarcity.

Mary Donovan, on the contrary, was a purely natural character. She did not pretend to anything beyond what she was. Cheerfulness and patient endurance, and a total absence of selfishness, were the qualities that shone forth conspicuously in her daily life. Hope ever kindled in her bright eyes, and with the softest affections she mingled a fortitude

and a buoyancy of spirits which ensured admiration and regard. Self-enjoyment in the common acceptation of the word, she never thought of nor aimed at — her greatest pleasure seemed to be in promoting the happiness and comfort of those she loved. Her manner was easy but modest, and there was a simplicity and truth in all she said, that was as charming as it was uncommon. She was the child of Nature indeed, and therefore often of impulse, but then her feelings were well regulated, and poverty, misfortune, and frequent distress had had their due effect in chastening and refining the powers of a somewhat ardent mind. Under the garb of a peasant, she had all the attributes of a lady, and amid all the disadvantages of her low position she moved about in those wild hills, and by the shores of that lonely lake,

as "the guardian Naiad of the strand." Neither in face nor figure was she at first so striking as Florence—but there was a charm in those deeply expressive eyes, and in that smile, unequalled for sweetness, which it was dangerous to contemplate often, and frequently had I wondered, as I gazed upon her unobserved, how it was that such a being could be cast, as it were, alone and unprotected on the world's bleak shore.

But my boat has touched the land, and I hurry up the wild path that leads to Ballybog. I found Mary, as usual, attending her father, who, weak and helpless, sat in the porch—not, perhaps, enjoying so much, as courting the influence of a few gleams of winter sunshine. Notwithstanding what had recently passed between us, she met me kindly, and with the least possible embarrassment of manner, but she looked

grave. When I accosted her father, I found at once that the late improvement in his mind and memory had almost passed away.

"My dear father," said Mary, speaking in an under-tone, "had but little rest last night. His mind has again been engaged in some scientific subjects, which generally leave him much enfeebled in body and mind."

"What are you saying, Gwendoline?" inquired Mr. Donovan, glancing at Mary somewhat angrily through his lack-lustre eyes.

I looked up, surprised at this appellation, and Mary remarked that his favourite sister was so called, and he would sometimes apply the name to her.

(At this moment my uncle Rosse suddenly dropped his meerschaum. I

fancied he had been asleep, and a little piqued, I picked it up and presented it to him. He filled and relighted it, and motioned me to resume my story).

"I tell you," continued Mr. Donovan, "that I am not dreaming — but what I allege is a reality. Whence came those crowns, and bracelets, and corselets of the purest gold that are continually turning up in every part of this country? There is gold, and abundance of it, in these mountains of the west — I know it, and were I as young as you, Mr. Wyville, I would soon prove it, and realize a princely fortune. But, alas!" his voice sinking to a whisper, "I am poor and feeble!—my knowledge will die with me, because I have neither health nor capital to bring it into play. But you may, young sir, if you have only perseverance;

and some early day I will unfold to you facts and theories that will surprise and rouse you too."

"But why, sir," said I, willing to humour his delusion, "have not these treasures been brought to light? For eight hundred years and more, with some slight exception, no one has found gold in this country."

"Simply because they had not chemical knowledge to separate the ore from the matter in which it abounds. I have the secret, and it will die with me. Every rock around us possesses gold, more or less. It was to seek for it that I came here, and had I health, I would show them what science can accomplish. But alas, alas!"

The old gentleman paused—his voice had faltered from agitation and disappointed hope, and ere he could resume

the subject, his daughter said mildly, but firmly—

"Dear father, forget this subject if you can—you know what disappointment and ruin attend these schemes, and they prevent your enjoying the few advantages we do possess even here. My father may be right," continued she, addressing herself to me, "in the scientific view of the subject, but he has never yet been able to turn his theory to any practical use. Had he known and studied less, we might have been in a very different position."

Mr. Donovan had now dropped his head upon his breast, and was apparently muttering to himself.

"I could wish to know more of your history," said I, to Mary, "for I feel confident that your present situation is not the one to which you were born."

"Our history is not worth knowing," replied she; "it is a mere series of trials and failures—of hopes and disappointments, and could indeed have no other termination than what you are now witnessing. It mattered not what funds my dear poor father possessed, for they always wasted away in the pursuit of some chimerical object. And still, as is often, I believe, the case, others more prudent have succeeded in what half ruined him, and built up fortunes on those very discoveries which he failed to take advantage of. Severe as his attacks are, they are in fact merciful dispensations, for they prevent any of those schemes being attempted, which are sure to end in disappointment and loss."

Taking leave of Mr. Donovan, and the kind, patient, and hopeful creature

who watched over him with such filial love, I returned, melancholy and depressed, to Rathlynn.

* * * * *

I was superintending some horticultural operations next morning, when Nelly called out that a gentleman in the parlour wished to speak to me.

"Who could it be? Perhaps Mr. D'Arcie, or Father Roche?"

I hurried in, and on entering the room perceived Mr. Titus O'Toole, standing with his back to the window, in all the glories of his black suit and his stiff white neckcloth. He bowed stiffly, and when invited, declined to take a seat.

"Since such is the case, Master O'Toole" (I would not Mister him)—what is your business here?"

"My business is very short," replied

he, his voice trembling with agitation, and his pale face assuming an atrabilious tint; "you have insulted my friends the Fitzpatricks, especially Archibald Fitzpatrick, Esq., and he has commissioned me to demand satisfaction."

"And what satisfaction may he want, Master Titus?"

"The satisfaction of a gentleman, and such as a man of his high family is entitled to."

Titus stretched himself up, advanced one leg before the other, clenched his fists, and regarded me with much of the air of a fighting bantam.

"Then tell Mr. Archibald, your friend, from me, that I neither intend to murder him nor suffer him to murder me in cold blood. My principles

are averse to such unchristian and exploded practices."

"Then my friend commissions me further to say that, if such is the case, he will show his sense of your conduct to his family by horsewhipping you the very first time he meets you in public."

"Tell your friend that this is a game at which two can play, and that it will be at his peril that he assaults me either in public or in private."

"Is this all you have to say, Mr. Wyville, after the shameful way you have conducted yourself towards a certain member of the Fitzpatrick family, and of which I myself have been more than once a witness?"

"It is all I have to say, at least to your friend, as you are pleased to call him; but I have a word or two of advice to offer to yourself. If you dare

to accuse me of 'shameful conduct,' I will make you prove it, or chastise you as you deserve."

"Chastise me!" exclaimed the O'Toole, Junr., student of Trinity College, Dublin, —"is it you, a foreigner in the country, to chastise me? I should like to see the man that would do it. The O'Tooles, I can tell him, would make Donegal too hot for him, and that in a few hours, by Jove!"

"I would try the experiment now, you insolent puppy," said I, advancing towards him, "but you are fortunate in being under my roof, where I would not be uncourteous even to such a fellow as you. But go, sir,—there is the door, and should we meet outside my dwelling, I advise you to be more discreet in your expressions, or take the certain consequences."

Mr. Titus O'Toole, after arranging his neckcloth as if it choked him, and in a hurried manner straightening his hair with his long damp fingers, took up his hat, and backing towards the door, as if he was afraid of a kick, made good his retreat in what he must himself have thought a rather undignified way. As he went out I closed the door after him, and sat down to consider the somewhat new position in which I now found myself.

It was manifest that, for want of some better excuse for his malicious designs, and in order to enlist his father in the affair, Archibald had trumped up this fancied injury to his sister; and I felt convinced that if, by menaces of violence, they could so intimidate me as to force me into an engagement with Florence, both father

and son would accomplish a success which, though from different motives, they most ardently coveted. And in this respect my position was provoking. I could not, and I did not, accuse Florence of connivance in the scheme, but certainly she had been the cause, however unwittingly, of frequently placing me in a false position; and, as I could not deny the facts, and honour forbade me to explain causes, the opinion of the neighbourhood would certainly be against me—the D'Arcies perhaps excepted, who were no great admirers of the family at Mount Patrick.

My first impulse was to write to Florence herself, opening the whole matter, and putting it to her generosity to set it right. But a moment's further consideration deterred me — such a step might be misconstrued, and only aggra-

vate the evil, causing them to suppose that their threats had begun to take effect. I therefore finally determined to allow things to run their course, only using every necessary precaution not to be taken unawares. As to Mary Donovan, I resolved to watch over her safety with all the jealousy of a devoted lover, though I well knew she never could be mine, unless events the most improbable should change the present condition of things.

While these serious cogitations were employing my mind, an event occurred which plunged me into fresh perplexity. It was a note from Florence herself by the trusty hands of Larry, inviting me to an interview the following day at the waterfall.

"Nothing," she wrote, "could tempt me to this step but the most urgent

necessity. Our thus meeting, if even for the last time, may be the means of preventing some dreadful catastrophe. I ask it as a last favour, and I pledge my honour that no advantage shall be taken of it in any quarter—that it shall appear as my sole act, and one for which I alone am responsible. I have taken measures to prevent the possibility of our being seen or our meeting being discovered. I can only add that, in case of any *contretemps*, the production of this note will at once explain who was the culprit. I entreat you then, as a man of spirit and a gentleman, not to disappoint me. From you, at least, I have not deserved a negative to so simple a request."

So simple a request! "No, Florence," thought I, "this will not do—I am far enough in a scrape already, and need no

such fresh evidence as this to entrap me altogether. Most likely this is but a cunning device of the father, the brother, or both. They may have worked upon the poor girl's feelings or fears to aid their own purposes."

I called Larry into my room.

"Who gave you this note?" said I, looking sternly at him.

"Sure, the young lady at the Mount, who else?"

"But, Larry, I don't wish you to interfere so much—you may do me an injury without knowing it."

"God forbid!" ejaculated Larry.

"There is no answer," I continued, "to this note, and so you may tell the young lady when you happen to see her."

"Happen to see her," repeated Larry, shrugging his shoulders, "why, master,

she is on the little bridge in the glen at this moment, waiting for the good news."

"The good news," repeated I, surprised, "what good news?"

"Jist that your honor will do as the young lady asks you, and sorra a bit more."

I paused for a few moments to consider what was the most prudent course. A short civil note of refusal could do no harm, it would be less offensive than a verbal message, so I sat down and wrote:—

"After what has passed, and of which no doubt Miss Fitzpatrick is cognizant, she must allow the imprudence of any such meeting as the one proposed. Mr. F. W. must therefore on her account, as well as on his own, decline to take so hazardous and inexpedient a step."

"Egad, then," said Larry, as he hurried off, "it's the lucky boy I shall be to carry a scrap of this blessed handwriting to her who is expecting no less, and the good news with it, Avich!"

I could not help smiling at the poor fellow's mistake, and surmising what a different reception he would probably meet with from what he expected. And so it was. Larry returned crest-fallen; he winked his small grey eyes, and shrugged his shoulders, and clasped his hands together behind his back, and endeavoured to convince me by every means in his power that he was greatly disappointed and disgusted, and that I had been guilty of something or other, he did not know what, but which, anyhow, did not meet with his approval. I dismissed him with a grave

injunction that he would not intermeddle overmuch, and only act when he was duly instructed to do so."

"Which," replied he, as he slowly retired, "manes no more than this, that if the master was going to be murthered, I am to stand by till he tells me to interphare."

CHAPTER VII.

"When that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

Hamlet.

The weather had now become very severe, the mountains and even the lowlands were covered deep with snow, and blocks of ice began to form and swim on the surface of the Lough. It was the morning of Christmas Day. I rose early, determined that no obstacles should deter me from attending the

interesting services and ordinances of the Church. On entering my parlour I found Mrs. Doran and Nelly busily engaged in adorning the windows and walls with branches of holly, the beautiful scarlet berries and the dark green leaves forming a striking contrast to the snowy vesture of the world without.

"And Dan McBride," said Mrs. Doran, "has brought an elegant mistletoe to hang in the kitchen, and he says that your honor has invited him, and Mick Daly, and Larry Lanigan, the omadawn, to come to supper in the evening, and the boys, let alone Nelly, have begged me to ask your honor to have Cooney the piper down, and they have swept and cleaned out the large shed, and adorned it with evergreens; belike some of the girls and

boys may come across the bog and wish to join the revel."

"Do as you please, Mrs. Doran," said I, "only take care there is plenty to eat, and not too much whisky. Perhaps I may come in and see you myself."

"God bless you, master, and long may you live," was the response of Mrs. Doran, and of Nelly also, whose cheeks coloured up with delight.

I had scarcely finished my breakfast the morning after, being St. Stephen's Day, when the sound of Cooney's pipes was heard outside, and a *posse* of young men and women, all in their best dresses, and poor was the best, presented themselves before the window, and a bird seated in a bush, carried in procession, was held up amid the plaudits of the assembly. Then two stepped forward and

sung an ancient ditty beginning, "The wran, the wran," meaning the wren exhibited in the bush, and then Cooney gave a flourish with his pipes, and the whole assembly formed into order, and, spite of the snow, danced away to the inspiriting strains of the piper. * A douceur was expected at the completion of this ceremony, and judging from the shouts of applause and exclamations of delight, mine must have far exceeded the usual gift on these occasions.

"By Shasthone," said Cooney, as they moved away, "the Sacchenach jintleman bates them all entirely; what did we get at Mount Pathric, boys?"

* The ditty runs thus,—

"The wran! the wran! the king of all birds
St. Stephen's Day was caught in the furze,
Altho' he's little his family's great,
Get up fair ladies and give us a trate!
And if your trate be of the best,
In Heaven we hope your soul will rest, &c."

"Two damns and a curse," said one of the men, "bad cess to him! And he bid us move off with our popery and hathenish customs, or he'd let the dogs loose on us."

"Hurrah for the Sacchenach jintleman, and may the Lord encrase him, and grant him a long life, and many a merry Christmas!"

With this warm-hearted blessing they moved off.

But to resume, after this digression. It was, as I have said, Christmas Day in the morning.

My walk to church by the mountain road was not unpleasant, though difficult, on account of the deep snow. The air was keen and frosty, but there was no wind, and the scene around me was one of such utter desolation and wildness, that I felt as if in

a new region—it might be the ice-bound mountains of Iceland or Nova Zembla. After passing the Glenlara bridge, over the river Rath, which flowed out of the Lough into the sea, I met many parties issuing out of the distant valleys, or from the slopes of the hills, wending slowly along, and as I neared the little Protestant Church—seated low on the bank of a mountain stream—I saw many hundreds of these directing their course to a huge barn-like building, surmounted with a cross, that stood cheerless and bleak on the mountain side. This was the Roman Catholic Chapel.

One could scarcely believe that such a total want of taste could prevail at the present day among the votaries of that faith, which in former times had exhibited to the world the purest, the

grandest, and most interesting specimens of architecture. But so it is. With few exceptions, the Roman Catholic places of worship are hideous without and squalid within, and it is the more extraordinary, as it is generally supposed that the gorgeousness of their modes of worship was one great means of attracting and retaining the veneration of the people.

The Protestant place of worship, though small, and giving but little evidence of a dominant Church, yet was not uncomfortable. Erected by the proprietor of the district, it had all the materials for being made decent and comfortable, if not pretty; but owing to the carelessness of the churl who held the preferment, it too wore an air of slovenliness and neglect. The churchyard had been planted tastily with yews, hollies, and other evergreens, and the walks bordered

with box; but now the place was overgrown and choked up, and there being no free circulation of air, the walls of the building became damp, and the interior, of course, cold and cheerless. And then the duty was so badly performed! Often had we to wait for half an hour or more ere the clergyman made his appearance, and then the service was so indecorously hurried through, and the extempore sermon such a tissue of unintelligible jargon, that it required a strong sense of propriety to attend the place at all.

And so it was; while hundreds in all weathers, storm or sunshine, repaired devoutly to the huge cheerless building on the hill-side, one solitary policeman, and perhaps an occasional visitant to the neighbourhood, and myself, formed the whole Protestant congregation.

And it was this almost universal neglect of their duties, on the part of the Reformed clergy, and the shameful manner in which the patronage of the Irish Church was distributed, that not only riveted the affections of the people to the Roman faith, but caused even the Saxon settlers to desert the Church of their fathers, and become its most violent opponents.

I found the D'Arcies at church, notwithstanding the severity of the weather, and as we remained during the whole of the services, I accepted their invitation to return with them, as the day would be far spent ere I could return and reach Doonore in my own boat. The more I saw of this family the more was I pleased with them. They were in every respect superior to the people among whom they dwelt, and they lived

so happily, too, amongst themselves, that it was a pleasure to be with them. The eldest son, now of age, had already taken a good degree at Oxford, and he had come to spend his Christmas with his approving parents. They were justly proud of him. He was a fine, handsome fellow, much resembling his father, both in person and in the somewhat formal quietude of his manners, and there was an openness and candour about him peculiarly attractive.

We were soon friends. He told me he had been staying with some relatives in Leicestershire, and had there met my sister, who no sooner knew his destination than she made a thousand inquiries, and had entrusted a packet to his care to deliver to me. It contained many little articles of her own manufacture, and a long and most affectionate

letter, concluding with a request that I would describe all the D'Arcies to her, and also add every information I could pick up about them. "Mr. Robert D'Arcie," continued she, "is a guest, and an honoured one too, of the Bohuns—Sir John is very partial to him, and so I think are two at least of his daughters. But I do not think them peculiarly taking—what do you say, Frank? I never thought *you* admired them much. Besides, I have heard them say that they would not marry Irishmen."

"And so Robert knows Mr. Wyville's sister, papa," said Susan, as we drove along; "but he won't tell us anything about her—it is so stupid of him. I daresay she is very pretty, and he is very much in love with her, if the truth be told."

"What do you reply to this accusation, Robert?" said Colonel D'Arcie, smiling.

"I have no reply to make," said he, "further than that I found Miss Wyville a very polished, well-informed, agreeable person, beloved by her friends, and admired by all who had the pleasure of her acquaintance."

"Then she cannot resemble her father and brother, I should think," pursued Susan, dimpling her pretty face with a hearty laugh, "for they are such stiff, formal people, quite of the Sir Roger de Coverley school."

"Susan, Susan!" said Mrs. D'Arcie, shaking her head, "when will you cease to be a mere silly school-girl?"

"Really, mamma, I am in no fault. We know the Admiral, from Mr. Wyville's own description, and as for him-

self, you know he is one of your own countrymen, and that is quite enough to suppose all we have said of him. That the English are all dull, stiff, matter-of-fact people, is allowed by everybody—even by themselves. We always found them so, did we not, Fanny?"

"With some exceptions, Susan, and one you know in particular."

"I allow no exceptions," tartly observed Susan, at the same time blushing up to the eyes.

The merry prattle of these two pretty girls always amused me, but they could also, when occasion called it forth, talk well and seriously also, and a thought often passed across my mind, how desirable it would be could Mary Donovan enjoy their acquaintance, and the advantages of such society. But I know not how it was, as I glanced at

Robert D'Arcie, I felt that, after all, matters had better remain as they were.

Everything passed off very well; the dinner was profuse, and the hospitalities of the house extended to all connected with the estate, and while the harp and violin were doing their best in the uncarpeted dining-room, the pipes of Cooney Corcoran were blowing smithereens in the servants' hall, where Larry Lanigan, Dan MacBride, and Mick Daly were the "heroes of the evening."

There was a large party of the neighbouring gentry — the O'Tooles, the Corrigans, the O'Flesks, &c. The family of Mount Patrick had declined, a circumstance that gave me great relief, as I should have found it difficult to know how to meet them. It was my lot to take out Miss Julia Corrigan to dinner;

and when I looked upon that parrot-like profile, and observed those quick grey eyes, high cheek-bones, ruddy complexion, and abundant locks of a sandy red, I could not wonder at the preference Archibald gave to Mary Donovan. But, nevertheless, Miss Julia was amusing enough. As she had money, so had she a will of her own. She was not destitute of good temper, spoke loud, affected not to care much what she said, wished to give you the notion that she was a girl of spirit, and rattled on with all the excitement and peculiar phraseology and pronunciation of a young lady born and partly bred in the pleasant town of "Cark," or Cork, as we English miscall it.

Her conversation was worth recording, but to give it properly is altogether beyond my powers; it would require a

Carleton, a Hall, or a Croker to do justice to it. To my great surprise, she was amazingly cordial with me—wondered I did not come to Mullikeen oftener, her father would be so glad to see me, and he often asked why I did not attend the market or the petty sessions, &c.

"We like the English, all of us," continued Miss Julia, "and if you will only come amongst us, as you ought, it shan't be our fault if you don't like the Irish. We all wonder, Mr. Wyville, what confines you so much to this stupid Lake, and its rocks, and black bogs, when you might carry the whole world before you at Mullikeen. We fancied there was a pair of black eyes at the Mount that monopolized you, but the mouth that belongs to them told me such was not the case, and never would be, and so we can only suppose," con-

tinued she, looking slily across the table to the Miss D'Arcies, "that Mr. Wyville is in love with himself."

I joined in the hearty laugh produced by this sally, and purposely made myself as agreeable to my good-tempered neighbour as I could. My present hazardous position in the country disposed me to make friends where I could.

It was now late in the evening, and I had retired to a separate refreshment room with the two Miss D'Arcies, with one of whom I had been dancing, when Susan said in a low tone, "Follow us for a few minutes to mamma's sitting-room—we wish to speak with you."

I did as I was ordered, wondering what it could be.

We were soon seated before a blazing wood fire, and Susan opened her subject.

"We always thought you a man of

very good taste, Mr. Wyville, and now we are certain of it."

I bowed, and waited for what would follow.

"You are also a most determined sportsman," said Fanny, "for you are satisfied to walk for miles over the mountains, where there is not a chance of a shot."

"And Mrs. Doran told our housekeeper only yesterday," said Susan, "that you did not dine at home more than three days in a week, and that she and Nelly Sullivan were often frightened out of their wits lest some harm should have come to you. And when we inquired of Larry Lanigan how it was," continued Susan, "he said he thought you must be a great 'feelosophee,' for you loved to be on the tops of the mountains, 'alone by yourself,' looking at the stars,

and the sun and moon, and fine prospects, and that you ate nothing at all, nor tasted so much as a glass of whisky, or a pipe of tobacco. Indeed, Larry hinted that you know more about the fairies and fairy-land than you ought to do."

All this time I felt the colour rising to my cheeks, and my heart beat, fearing what might be the conclusion to this curious prelude.

"Seriously then, Mr. Wyville, we did wonder—and girls like us, in such a quiet place as this, have a right to be inquisitive—what took you so often up the Lough—what made you frequent the western slopes, where there was apparently no attraction—and what, above all, caused such a commotion, as we have been privately informed has taken place, among certain persons at the

Mount? You see what a great man you are in the country, when it is worth everybody's while to be looking after you. Well, Mr. Wyville, we have found it all out!"

I was inwardly vexed at my own emotions as this extraordinary attack was proceeding, and vainly did the thought suggest itself, "What was all this to me?—what had I to do with Mary Donovan?—and what real interest, beyond mere badinage, could these young ladies take in her?" I endeavoured to rally and meet them in their own style.

"And so, puissant members of the Holy Inquisition," said I, bowing low, "you have discovered these secrets without the application of the steel collar or the thumb-screw, and I now await these startling revelations with fear and

trembling. Only let me beseech you to temper justice with mercy."

"Oh! as for 'mercy,' such a term was never recognized by the Inquisition, as you well know," said Susan; "we shall have no pity unless you confess at once. Beware of the torture."

"It is applied already," replied I, with more truth, however, than the expression was meant to convey.

"Well then, to commence our examination. Do you know a place called Ballybog?—do you not often visit there?—and have you not concealed the very existence of such a place from us?"

"I plead guilty."

"To all?"

"Yes, to all."

"Well then, really, Mr. Wyville, joking apart," said Fanny, seriously, "it was not friendly to make that a secret

to us, which everybody else knew. We find that you have deprived us of the enjoyment of a very pleasant acquaintance."

"How so? The family at Ballybog wished for none—nay, they even for a long time declined mine, and it was only on certain restrictive conditions that I was admitted to a very casual intercourse. Miss Donovan positively, for some time, prohibited my visits even to her father; and not till circumstances rendered the interference of a stranger desirable, indeed almost necessary, was I freely admitted by the sanction of their friend, Father Roche."

"We have no right to question you, even thus far, Mr. Wyville," said Susan, slightly blushing, "and you must be angry, I am sure, at our impertinence. But it was not to exert Inquisitorial

powers, but in reality to ask a favour that we have sought this interview. We have seen Mr. and Miss Donovan, and we wish to serve them. What an interesting person she is!—what sensible, engaging manners!—how very beautiful she is!—and even in that sordid raiment how elegant and how superior to her position! It seems quite a romance!"

"And a mystery too," rejoined Fanny. "I cannot believe she is a mere peasant girl, and it is easy to observe in the father the wreck of better days. You cannot think, Mr. Wyville, how much we are interested, and we have papa's permission to speak to you on the subject. What is their history?"

"Indeed," said I, "I do not know any more than yourselves, but I suspect pecuniary difficulties have banished

them to that spot. Mr. Donovan has been a man of science, and a speculator."

"A speculator!—how horrid!" ejaculated Susan, "I always think the partition is very thin that divides speculation from downright insanity. If such is the case, there can be no hope of better times for poor Miss Donovan."

"I fear not; they have been much annoyed, and intend leaving Ireland for one of our colonies, where they have connections, if not friends."

"Annoyed? How and by whom?"

"I may not say further, Miss Fanny, but Mr. D'Arcie knows all."

"Well, we are glad of that, and so shall ask no further. We come then to the old question—will you show us how we can serve Miss Donovan, and, further, will you aid us in doing so?"

"Certainly; but I do not see how."

"Money, clothing, anything we have, are at her service."

"You are very kind, but I know well she will accept nothing from any quarter. She does not complain. But may I ask, in return, how you made her acquaintance?"

"In the strangest way in the world. Fanny and I had mounted our ponies and made a call at Mullahash, and after lunching there, as the day was fine and bracing, we extended our ride on the western border of the Lough. We had only proceeded through a very wild district about two miles when Fanny's pony took fright, and leaving the narrow road, made for a marshy piece of ground at the foot of a rocky eminence, on which there was a habitation. I followed as quickly as I could and just in time to see Fanny thrown off, and Violet and

her both immersed in the bog. You may imagine how I screamed for help, till at length a rough-looking fellow, attended by two young women, came to the rescue, and Fanny was conveyed more frightened than hurt into the house. One of these females was Miss Donovan herself; she had seen the accident, and hurried to the spot with a sort of hind they employed, and his daughter, to render every possible assistance. It was while we waited the return of the servant who rode the recreant pony to Doonore for a change of dress, that we made acquaintance with Miss Donovan and her father. Helpless and even sometimes childish as he appeared to be, he was very polite, and wished us to be as much at home as possible. But what a situation for a nice creature like his daughter, and yet, to see how easily all

these cares, and anxieties, and hardships sit upon her, how resigned she is, and how she seeks her real consolation in the performance of her duties, is a lesson which may be read to advantage by the great majority of our sex. Fanny did not regret her fall, nor did I my fright. I am sure they are very poor, and in that remote corner of the earth must have great difficulty in procuring the bare necessities of life. Do you think they would visit us at Doonore, Mr. Wyville? They can be as quiet and retired as at that odious Ballybog. If they would only do so, all else would be easy, and my father is as anxious as we are, and so also is my dear mother."

The matter required consideration, and I paused long before I replied. At length a thought struck me.

"I well know," said I, "that to try to induce Mr. and Miss Donovan to come to Doonore would be lost labour; such an attempt might hasten their flight, but one thing I may suggest. Circumstances may, and I fear will occur which may render a temporary shelter requisite; should such be the case, am I at liberty to bring Mr. and Miss Donovan here? It would relieve me probably of much embarrassment. These circumstances I cannot explain to you, but the Colonel shall be cognizant of everything."

"Enough," said Susan. "They shall ever find a ready welcome here, and while we feel that they are fortunate in having so generous a protector as yourself, we entreat you not to relax in your care and sympathy. Miss Donovan herself told us that nothing could exceed your kindness and generosity but the

delicacy with which they were accompanied. And so ends the first meeting of the Inquisitorial conclave."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Dissemble not your hatred—
Swear your love."
Richard III.

As I sat at the stern on my return home, silently guiding my boat as it glided swiftly through the dark waters of the Lough, I had time to review all that had happened since my arrival at Rathlynn. After all, though my position was singular, there was nothing out of the usual line of human events. The world's surface is ever as restless as that of the ocean, and, from youth to

age man is ever tossed to and fro, the sport of hopes and fears, and the creature of circumstances over which he has but little real control.

That the D'Arcies had so warmly espoused the cause of Mr. and Miss Donovan was a great relief to my mind, for though I well knew that Colonel D'Arcie would hesitate in his private capacity to interfere with the Fitzpatricks, yet he was willing to advise and to afford his countenance and the shelter of his house to these unfortunates, should occasion render them necessary. I no longer felt alone in the matter, and I resolved to redouble my vigilance, as I had a secret presentiment that Archibald was on the very eve of some violent attempt.

When I arrived at the Lodge the early dawn was just rendering visible

the outlines of the distant mountains, and a cold blast from the north began to disturb the hitherto placid bosom of the Lough. I found Nelly sitting up for me, and a huge turf fire burning in my room, and the hissing kettle, with tea-things and glasses, ready for such refection as I might select after my long excursion.

"Mrs. Doran went to bed early, sir," said Nelly, "and told me to call her at seven o'clock, for she did not think your honour would lave the ladies and the Christmas doings before daylight. Shall I reach the whisky, or will I make the tay for you, sir?—and there's some skippered salmon Mrs. Doran left ready on the dresser to be cooked, or a mutton chop, or——"

"Thank you, Nelly, I do not require anything but one cup of tea, and

then to bed, for I am a little tired."

"And sure it's natural your honour should be, seeing that ateing, and drinking, and dancing so many hours must damp a man's spirits, let alone the ladies'—but there's no end to them —they bang Banagher entirely—they're never tired, not they, the craturs!"

Nelly had shut the door, but returned.

"There's been a gorsoon here twice with a note, which he said he must deliver into your own hands; but Mrs. Doran took it, and told him that she would be sure to give it to you the moment you returned. I am just going to call her, sir,—shall I bring you the note?"

"It will do after breakfast—but no, on second thought, go up to Mrs. Doran for it."

In a moment Nelly returned with it, and left the room.

It was from Bridget Cooney, the cosherer, and was as follows:

"Bee here to-morrow evening at sixe of the clock, and don't fale.—B. C."

I had intended going to Ballybog the ensuing day, but the weather was so tempestuous, and the storm chafed the lake into such huge billows, that I gladly remained at home, and wrote a long letter to my sister and another to my father, which detailed my proceedings so far as the business of the farm was concerned. I dined early, and at five o'clock took a small boat and paddled her on the sheltered side of the Lough, till I came to the spot where the river issuing from it flows down the valley. Then taking the path before trod by Larry and myself, I

soon arrived at the lonely cottage of this strange woman.

I looked around. Not a soul, not an animal, was visible. It was impossible to conceive anything more solitary. I opened the door gently, and as gently closed it, and found myself in the same spot where I had stood not long ago, and, as I thought, in the same presence. Crouched on the hearth, as before, was a female figure, just visible by the faint glimmering of a newly-replenished fire; but when by a sudden flaming up of the fuel, I could see more clearly, my surprise may be imagined when I discovered in the person before me Florence Fitzpatrick! She half rose from her seat—her face was pale and agitated. I stepped back in sorrow and amazement.

"You are surprised to see me here,

Mr. Wyville," said she, affecting a calmness manifestly very foreign to her feelings; "but as you refused my request to meet elsewhere, I had no alternative but to adopt this course."

"But why, Miss Fitzpatrick," said I, "situated as we are, why should we meet at all? You must be aware of the danger of such a step."

"Danger!" reiterated she, while her proud lip curled with disdain — "I know not what danger is, when there is a point to be gained. Yet," continued she, more softly, "do not judge me harshly—it is necessary we should meet."

"Surely," I replied, "after what has recently transpired between myself and two members of your family, it is——"

She hastily interrupted me.

"I have nothing to do with the

proceedings of any member of my family. I have always acted, and shall continue to act independently of them. I do not approve what they have done, and I disavow most solemnly any participation in their acts. To me their conduct has been cruel indeed—to you most insolent."

"But your father?"

"He may have purposes of his own to serve, or he may be partly led by Archibald. But, oh! Mr. Wyville, do not for one moment suppose that I could act so treacherously to you, so unworthily to myself, as in the remotest degree to have sanctioned such conduct. I feared what your inference might be, and I determined to clear myself in your eyes. Florence Fitzpatrick would scorn such meanness. No, Mr. Wyville, I am incapable of thus

endeavouring to entangle or to embarrass a friend whom I still so sincerely esteem."

"I never even in thought accused you or believed you capable of any meanness, Miss Fitzpatrick," said I, truly commiserating her position.

"Thank you — thank you!" warmly said she, "I now am more easy. And yet I could scarcely think that your generous nature would misapprehend me. May I flatter myself, then, that there is no breach in our friendship, Mr. Wyville—that we are just as before?"

"Certainly," I replied. "With regard to the past, my only feeling is sorrow."

"Sorrow?" reiterated she, quickly—"sorrow for what? That we ever met?"

"Oh, no!—sorrow for the strange conduct of your friends."

"I am satisfied. And now," after a pause, "let us discuss the old subject —this creature at Ballybog—what is to be done with her?"

"Miss Fitzpatrick," replied I, gently, "to us this must now be a forbidden topic. I cannot aid you—nor can I interfere in any way. Only think of my present position with your family."

She looked up full in my face, as if anxiously scrutinizing its expression. The now blazing bog-wood threw its bright glare over her face and figure, and truly both were striking in the extreme. Her dark, expressive eyes seemed to look me through.

"Could I be assured *that* was your true—your only reason—I might be content; but—but, Mr. Wyville, I fear you have another, and a stronger motive for thus withdrawing yourself from my

confidence. Be candid—is it not so?" Her voice here dropped to a hoarse whisper — her bosom heaved — the very muscles of her face betrayed her emotion. "There wants but this," continued she, "to put the last dark shade upon my hatred, and to nerve my final resolve. Mr. Wyville, do you too love this accursed witch — this girl of Ballybog? Yes or no — oh! give an answer, or I shall die!"

"My dear Florence," said I, sitting down close to her, and taking her hand, "why all this agitation?—this needless excitement? — you have no cause for either—be composed—what is the family of Ballybog to me? — let us change the subject—it is unpleasant to both of us."

"No, Mr. Wyville, I will not change the subject—I will know my position—I came here for that purpose—I do suspect

that you, as well as my brother, are spell-bound by that low peasant girl, and I only want the knowledge of this fact to determine the steps I shall take."

"But, my dear Miss Fitzpatrick," said I, soothingly, "why do you agitate yourself on my account?—That your brother's proceedings should cause you some anxiety, I know, but——"

"But," interrupted she, almost fiercely, "but what business have *you* with me, or my thoughts or my actions? This is what you were going to add, was it not so?"

I paused—I really did not know what to say — I heartily wished escape was possible.

"Then you and Archibald are not only enemies, but rivals, and if so, whose part am I to take?—Certainly not yours, Mr. Wyville, you neither know

what you are doing, nor do you know where you stand. I came here to save you. You have made enemies of those who are unscrupulous as to means of revenge. But if you too are befooled by that low girl, you must take your chance. As you sow, so must you reap."

"But what do you mean by my being fascinated or befooled by Miss Donovan? What reason have you to assert or to suspect this?"

"Will you answer me one question?—and I will not pursue the subject further," said she, lowering her voice almost to a whisper; "say—only one question?"

"I will," said I, willing to close the subject.

"Would you marry Mary Donovan, if Archibald was not in the way?"

"I would not," replied I, firmly, and

meeting her gaze with a somewhat stern expression, for I felt the impropriety of the whole proceeding.

"And now, Mr. Wyville," said she, "allow me to apologize for conduct which, I know, lessens me in your esteem. But, oh! I was miserable at the idea of that creature circumventing me both in my family and in my friendship. Our Milesian blood can endure no such rivalship—then all the usual barriers are broken down, and though, when all is calm and bright, we can be still and tranquil as you have generally seen me, yet, when the wind arises and the tempest threatens, we rouse into action, we *will* control the storm!"

Never shall I forget the almost sublime expression of her countenance as she said these words. She stood at her full height—her hands were crossed upon her

swelling bosom—and she towered proudly as Juno herself, longing to hurl the thunders and lightnings of Jove. I trembled for poor Mary Donovan. It was not probable that one who had already risked so much, and gone so far, would sit down and brood quietly over her wrongs—real or supposed.

It was now dark—the rain beat against the windows, and the wind howled in the chimney top. I proposed to Florence to accompany her home; she declined, saying she had already provided for that—"but," added she, as she held out her hand to bid me adieu, "had you met me at the waterfall, it might have been different."

"Happy then am I that I did not," said I to myself, as I left the cabin and rapidly hurried through the darkness into the main road. I had not

yet gained it, when a strong arm seized mine, and, in spite of my resistance, hurried me down the bank towards the river.

I here closed my manuscript, and fancying my good uncle Rosse was asleep, sat silent lest I should disturb him. He rested his head upon his hand, and I supposed his eyes were closed.

"Thank you, Frank," said he; "I was not asleep, but, as you read, many strange thoughts flitted across my brain. Your story becomes more interesting, and though you appear to me to be in a thorough mess, yet, my boy, I hardly see how you could avoid it. Perhaps it would have been quite as well had you taken less interest in that poor girl at Ballybog."

"And have left her, unprotected as she was, to her fate! No, sir, *you* would not have done so, that I well know!"

"Oh! don't always hold me up for an example of what should or should not be done. I never could bear to stand by and see any one persecuted and oppressed, much less a woman. But I am only taking the rational view. It is always suspicious when a young gentleman takes such a lively interest in what does not really concern him. Had you not enough to do with your farm, your shooting, and your fishing, to engage your attention? And, moreover, remember your promise to your father. It was, at least, throwing yourself in the way of temptation. No man is safe who wanders about as a knight-errant. The most se-

cure plan is for each to mind his own business, and let the world go round."

"But, sir, my interference was purely unselfish. I had no intention of gaining Mary Donovan's affections, and I am sure she made no effort to attract me, but the contrary. I knew she was leaving for a distant land, and it was improbable, if not impossible, we should ever meet again."

"I do not deny," said Mr. Rosse, "but that the poor girl conducted herself very properly—differently, indeed, from what most would in her position; I have not one word to say against her—but don't tell me, Frank, that at that time, at least, you were not over head and ears in love with her."

"I did admire and feel for her very much, certainly, but then I knew that

we could never be more than friends. Surely I might pity or admire, nay, even love her, if you will have it so, without the slightest intention on my part of uniting my fate with hers. I might even wish it ardently, but then I knew and felt that such a union was impracticable. Her manner, too, gave me no encouragement."

"Your feelings, Frank, are amusing, they are in such exact accordance with the waywardness of our nature. So long as that grand creature, Florence Fitzpatrick, was on the stilts, you glanced at her with favour, but when she descended and next to owned her love, you grew cool and preferred the peasant girl that set her dog at you, and told you to keep at home. So true is it, what that great French moralist, Rochefoucault, says:—'We are

nearer loving those who hate us, than those who love us more than we choose.'"

CHAPTER IX.

"I dare not fight."

Henry. V.

I SAID, at the termination of the last chapter, that, on leaving Bridget Cooney's cottage, a strong arm had arrested my progress into the main road, and hurried me towards the margin of the river. Arrived there I seized upon the fellow who had thus unceremoniously stopped me, and asked who he was and what he meant.

"Hush, hush," said a low voice, "it is only Dan McBride, your honor.

Follow me along the river side for a few minutes, and I will tell you the whole rights. But don't spake."

I now followed willingly, and we rapidly traversed some rough damp meadows till we attained the old bridge which spanned the turbulent stream by several low and massive arches. We sheltered under one which was generally dry, being made for the excessive floods which occasionally poured from the mountains.

"Well, Dan," said I, "I suppose we may talk now. What is in the wind?"

"Egad, master, you have had a lucky night of it this turn, anyhow. Five minutes longer, and you would have been kilt entirely. I heard them coming down the road just as you left Bridget's door."

"Who?"

"Who else but Mr. Archibald and three men from Mullikeen. They meant to catch you with the young lady."

"How do you know this, Dan? I did not know myself of any young lady being there."

"Of coorse, of coorse, it was just by an accident, as they say," said Dan. "But how was it I found it out, master? I'll tell you. My sister is married, and lives at Mullikeen, and her little girl Kathleen goes often to play with little Kitty Clancey. Kathleen is a sharp girl, and as she and Kitty were playing at making tay with acorn cups and cockle shells and broken crockery behint the scrane, in comes Mr. Archibald and asks for Tom Clancey. My sister goes out and sends Tom in, and there

by themselves, as they thought, the whole thing was argified and put in order. Tom being, you see, sir, foster-brother to this Mr. Archibald, and so there's no sacrets between them. As luck would have it, I was at my sister's two minutes after they left together, and Kathleen told me nearly every word that passed between them. We boys, plaze your honor, have not eyes in our heads without using them, and so I knowed a thing or two, and saw what game was up, and off I ran by the short mountain road, took the light skiff at Rathlynn, pushed acrass the Lough, and, by all the powers, jist got here in time to save your honor's credit—if not your life. I was jist going to enter the cottage to warn you when you came out."

"Thank you, Dan. I wonder how you did it—the odds were against you, for

they had a car at Mullikeen, no doubt."

"So they had, sir; but what did I care for that? Never fear, when a thing is to be done I'll do it, by dad, with a heart and a half."

I was horror-struck at the escape I had had. Without any fault of my own, into what a position might I have been thus betrayed! There must have been treachery somewhere. Surely Florence —but no—I at once acquitted her—the midwife must have been at the bottom of it. Perhaps the whole matter was hatched between her and Archibald, to give him a fair pretext for violence. But what was now to be done? I resolved not to return home, but sending Dan to inform Mrs. Doran, I proceeded on foot along the public road to a small hotel which affords sporting and sea-bath-

ing accommodation, being scarcely a mile from the sea coast.

It was very dark, and I walked along rapidly. An occasional light gleaming for an instant from some lonely cabin down by the shore, or far up the bleak mountain side, was the sole proof of my being in an inhabited country. The dark heathery slopes, with many a tiny brawling rivulet dashing down their sides, rose on my left; on the right the smell of the sea came over a flat morass, and I could distinctly hear the rush of the tide as it ran up and filled the estuary beyond. Not one creature did I meet till on the summit of a rise I saw before me the glimmering lights of the Royal Harp hotel, suddenly revealed through the now leafless branches of a few sheltering ash-trees. In a few moments I

entered this hospitable home, and was seated in the bar in close conversation with the worthy landlady, Mrs. Connell.

Mrs. Connell was an excellent woman of her stamp. Left a young and handsome widow, with several young children, she battled bravely with the world, and with little assistance from friends—for friends in such cases often keep at a distance—she had managed to pay her way, and retain her position, both as mistress of the hotel, and manager of the general shop, which in Ireland is so often carried on under the same roof. I had often stayed there when I went out seal-shooting and sea-fishing, or pursuing the rabbits on the huge sand-heaps that stretched far into the bay, and had always been well and kindly treated—indeed, more as a friend than a mere traveller seeking accommodation.

"It is some time now since I have seen you," said Mrs. Connell; "I thought you would have been on the sand-banks, for there is plenty of sport, they say. Indeed, I wished you would come this way, for there is a good deal of talk in the country about matters at the Lough, and your name often comes uppermost. But," continued she, lowering her voice, "this is not the place for talking, if you would not wish the whole county to know it, so you had better step into Mr. Dignum's parlour, and I will join you there in a few minutes. You will find him at his evening's nap, I daresay."

I found my worthy friend and fellow sportsman, not indeed asleep, but compounding, with all his usual gravity, a bowl of whisky-punch, and seated by a rousing peat-fire.

After the usual hearty greeting, I sat

down to watch the important operation of which I was to partake the benefit when completed.

"Egad! my young friend," said Mr. Dignum, as he applied the lemon squeezer with good effect, "you are just come in the very nick, first as concerns the punch, and next inasmuch as the mistress and I wish to have a word or two with you. She is coming in, I suppose?"

At this moment Mrs. Connell made her appearance, and took her seat on the far side of the table.

"There is something stirring at the Lough, Mr. Wyville," said she; "and as you know everything true or untrue that happens in the country is talked over here, Mr. Dignum and I were anxious to tell you all we knew. It happened, only a few days ago, that

young Fitzpatrick of the Mount called here with two gentlemen, and as they came into the bar to refresh themselves, I heard all they said."

"And what might they have to say about me?" I inquired, not very easy at this information.

"Oh! I can't tell you—they spoke so very unfriendly," and the widow looked down in evident embarrassment.

"Pooh! pooh! why can't you speak plain, and tell Mr. Wyville exactly how it was," said Mr. Dignum, looking up from his punch-bowl. "If you don't I will—what the deuce is there to conceal?"

"Well, you must tell it then," said the widow, "for I cannot."

"The fact is, then," resumed Mr. Dignum, "you and this young Hector have quarrelled. He told his companions

that you were nothing better than a coward and a poltroon, and he meant to horsewhip you the first time he could meet with you; but you prudently kept out of the way. Now that's all, and quite enough, I think. If you want a friend, Wyville, you know where to find one; and I have a pair of bull-dogs ready that know how to bite, my boy. So when shall it come off?"

Mrs. Connell put her apron to her eyes, and was visibly affected.

"Oh, how I hate these murdering courses which they call duelling!" said she. "Many's the pretty man now under the sod, and all for nothing, as one may say. But I suppose it must be. I only hope you are a good shot, Mr. Wyville, for I never could endure that young man—he was always a bully, from boyhood up."

"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Connell," said I; "it is not my intention either to murder that young man in cold blood, or to allow him to murder me."

"Thunder and sparables!" exclaimed Mr. Dignum, dashing the well-squeezed peel of the lemon on the floor—"and you don't mean to wing the blackguard? Why, sir," continued he, looking sternly at me, "I thought you were an English gentleman? He has called you publicly a coward and a poltroon."

"Simply because he well knows that duelling is against my principles—otherwise young Mr. Fitzpatrick might have said less about it."

"Against your principles, sir?" exclaimed the old sportsman—"and where the devil, sir, did you pick up such

principles, sir?—not in England, I think. Egad! if the fellow had only lifted his thumb to me I would have measured twelve paces with him, and no time lost. But you are only joking—it's a joke, by dad, and nothing else! To let a man call you a coward, and not put a bullet through the mouth that uttered it! No, no—it's a joke—it's a joke!"

"It is no joke, indeed, my good friend," I replied; "murder is a fearful crime, whatever the provocation may be—but to murder a fellow-creature, or stand quietly to be murdered for next to nothing, is equally repulsive to common sense and contrary to the law of God."

"Phew!—and so you think it nothing to be called a coward? By all the saints, Mr. Wyville, I thought better

things of you. Then you do not intend to notice it?"

"Certainly not by shooting him through the head; but if he makes good his threat of personal violence, let him look to it. I can say no more."

Mr. Dignum suspended his operations at the punch, looking diligently into the fire all the time; at length, while adding the boiling water, he said:

"I never saw the thing in that light before—but certainly, if one only reflects, it *is* a sore thing to take away human life in cold blood, and nine times out of ten for a mere word that after all meant nothing. I remember my first cousin, Dick Denny, who fought with, and killed at the third shot his old friend Tom Powell, just because Tom contradicted him flatly about the Pope's

nephews and nieces, who he maintained were neither more nor less than his sons and daughters. Dick had never a happy day after, but took to drinking, and——"

"And thus," interrupted I, "added suicide to murder. It was one of the first of the Divine laws that murder was punishable with death. 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed.' I consider every duellist amenable to this law."

"What, that every man that fights a duel deserves hanging?"

"If he kills his antagonist—even if he does not, I would have him shut up for life."

Mr. Nehemiah Dignum looked up at me in perfect astonishment, and even Mrs. Connell anxiously and entreatingly watched the changes of his countenance.

"If that's your doctrine, egad! you would never have seen me anyhow, for I should have been shut up, as you call it, for life before I was twenty years old. I wonder what Scripture and religion have to do with men of honour?"

"Oh fie, Mr. Dignum!" exclaimed Mrs. Connell, "what would Father Ned say to that, I wonder?"

"D—— Father Ned, and all the parsons and priests into the bargain, if they meddle in things that don't concern them," said Mr. Dignum. "If there was a man in the whole barony whom I looked upon as a man of spirit, it was Frank Wyville. Why, sir, Archibald Fitzpatrick, clever as he is with his gun, never, to my knowledge, handled a pistol in his life. You might have saved your honour, and little mischief done after all."

"That does not weigh in the slightest degree with me. I do not consider either my honour or my courage compromised by what I am doing, or rather by what I will not do."

Mr. Dignum rang the bell.

"Here, Nancy"—as the girl entered—"go into my bedroom, and fetch a square case you will see on the table."

It was brought, and Mr. Dignum deliberately took out his "bull-dogs" and examined them.

"Now, Mr. Wyville, let us put the matter to some kind of test. We'll measure twelve paces in the yard, and try who can put a ball nearest a man's head chalked on the stable-door. After that we will talk about the punch."

Though I did not exactly know what the old sportsman was about, I was inclined to yield to his humour. The

head was accordingly drawn on the stable-door, twelve paces stepped, and taking one of the pistols and giving me the other, he took his position, and in due form fired at his supposed antagonist. The ball was four inches too much to the right.

"Now, Wyville, see if you can better that. Though it has not hit, it was not far from singeing the curls, eh!"

I then took my place and fired. The ball hit the head between the eyes. Mr. Dignum loaded again without speaking, and handed me the pistol. My second shot pierced the left eye, on which he walked quietly away, requesting me to follow him into the parlour. I did so, and he shut the door.

"I am quite satisfied, Wyville,—you are a brave man in the best sense of the word —for he who has his enemy's life in his

hands, and would rather be abused by the world than take it, is of all men the most really courageous, and—though I say it—a Christian to boot. So now for the punch."

This curious scene had not passed unobserved. Not only Mrs. Connell, but the women-servants, waiter, boots, ostler, and car-drivers had all stood by, and many encomiums were passed upon the English gentleman's skill.

"By the soul o' me, Jim," said Jerry, the boots, to the ostler, "that's just the soort of gintleman I'd never quarrel with at all, at all. A sinsible man would keep a civil tongue in his head, anyhow, if he'd any regard for his eyes."

"Or his brains," replied Jim, "if he had any."

Mr. Dignum, as Jerry always termed him, was "a grate sportsman," and so

indeed he was. Larry Lanigan allowed it, and said that not a man in Donegal (himself always excepted) could throw his line so far against wind. And he could tie "an ilegant fly," and "if a salmon was lurking in the pool, he was not the man to lave it there." Many a long story did Mr. Dignum recite of his exploits by flood and field, and in his various narrations he always suited the action to the word. Seated by the fireside close to the punch-bowl, he, in mock seriousness, would enact the part—raise his gun to his shoulder—fire—mark down his bird—command his dogs—seek the lost game, and store it in his bag. But to hear him recount his fishing exploits, was most wonderful of all. He acted the affair from beginning to end—showed where the monster lay as still as a stone—how he threw his famous fly with a blue hackle over the spot—how at the

second throw he rose the fish—but it was no go—the boy was shy—he tries again—up he comes—rolls over with the hook in his gill fast and sure—and then the plunge—the run to the extent of the line—the reeling up—off again—stops—flings himself out of the water—is reeled up quick—just in time—he plays the fellow for an hour save nine minutes, and at length gaffs him—a superb, fresh run fish, of twenty-four pounds eight ounces! Sent him a present to the mayor and 'prentice boys at Derry!

Poor Dignum! In paying this tribute to thy genuine humour and gallant spirit, I also acknowledge thy worth and social qualities, and lament that death—that unerring hand—hath at length gaffed thee, and deprived the world of a jovial companion—a real sportsman and an honest man. (His last legacy to me, when we parted on

my return to England, was a dozen of his most killing flies.)

When my old friend had exhausted his story, and called for a second bowl of punch, he suddenly changed the subject, and inquired what was the cause of my quarrel with my neighbours at the Mount. I knew I could trust him, and therefore, without the least hesitation, told him my position, only concealing, as I was in honour bound to do, such circumstances as could in any degree reflect upon Florence Fitzpatrick. I simply told him that the father and son chose to misinterpret my conduct to her, and to make it appear that I had acted dishonourably.

"The devil's in the women," said he, "a man is never safe with them. I never married myself, and for the best of reasons, I well knew my rods and fly-books and all my sporting gear

would soon be thrown overboard to make way for cradles, corals, rattles, and long frocks. I never, Wyville, looked sweet upon a woman but once in my life, and that woman was Miss Glorvina Flannigan. She was a fine creature, large and bony, but well covered with flesh, and her brogue was as rich as was her banker's book. Well, my boy, it was thought by my friends convenient that I should make up to her, and accordingly one day when I dined at Shambally House, sitting close to her at dinner, I began to whisper sweet things into her ears, and just as I thought she was taking the fly I had tied so elegantly, egad! she turned upon me quick, and in face of all the company exclaimed, 'Ye little ugly vagabond, if it wasn't out of respect for your father I'd kick

you down stairs.' That was my first and last effort in the courting line, and egad, I have been grateful to Miss Glorvina ever since. Now, my boy, follow my example, take warning, and never as long as you live flirt with a young woman again, and expect to get out of it scot free. I'd as soon wrestle with a seal in shallow water, or draw a badger with my fingers."

I could not help smiling at the graphic mode in which the old sportsman put the case, yet nevertheless I began to think there was much truth in what he said. .

"And now for one word of advice," continued he, "I say nothing to your objection to winging that young puppy Archibald—but *don't seem to avoid him.* The eyes of the whole country are upon you—go, therefore, to sessions, to market,

to the next large fair, show yourself everywhere with a good thick shillelah in your right hand, and a five-barrelled revolver in your side-pocket. There is not a more mischievous devil on earth than a true-bred Irish squireen, and make up your mind to this, that there is mischief brewing in more ways than one. As to that big fellow, old Fitzpatrick, he's a humbug all over—will growl like a bear, snap like a fox, but skulk away if matters are getting warm. Don't waste one word upon him, he's not worth it; with all his fine talk he has not one spark of honour or honesty about him, and egad, in the art of lying he'd beat Satan himself hollow. I am glad you have made a friend of D'Arcie, he's a gentleman outright, and nothing else; and take this to your comfort, my boy, that come what will you may reckon upon

us as fast friends. And as to a back,' you shall not want that, if needed. Jerry here has nine cousins and four brothers, all good boys, and who of themselves, with a few neighbours, form a powerful faction, and hold together like glue. A word from me makes them your friends, for they hate old Fitzpatrick because he put Jerry to prison for a fortnight for a little harmless poaching one night on the Lake. In all this be comforted—a good shot like you, with an active body and a shillelah in his hand, and a few boys of the right sort to back him, why, he's a match for all the scamps in Donegal if their name was legion!"

CHAPTER X.

He clanked Piercy o'er the head
A deep wound and a sair,
Till the best blood of his bodie
Cam running down his hair.

Auld Maitland.

The entrance of the priest Father Ned, of Mr. Gleeson, the doctor, and of a tall Sacchenach, a visitor at the hotel, interrupted further conversation, and as the punch-bowl was speedily replenished and preparations made for a "raal evening," I stole away as soon as I decently could,

and tried to lose myself and all my perplexities in sleep. But in vain. The waking visions of the night were dark and gloomy. I felt that my situation in the country was anything but pleasant, and that a stranger like myself would be sure to have the most unfavourable construction put upon his actions and motives. Then a something whispered me that I had intermeddled too much in the family matters at Mount Patrick, and that my taking up the championship of Mary Donovan without the remotest intention of marrying her myself would appear rather like Quixotism.

Archibald pretended that his intentions were honourable, and though he was engaged to another, what business had I to doubt his sincerity? Might he not have changed his intentions towards Julia Corrigan? And what right had I to interfere

with him?—was not Mary Donovan sufficient of herself to ignore his pretensions, if she chose to do so? In fact, I was not at all satisfied with myself—I was courting dangers and hatred on every side, and the end proposed—the freeing of that mountain maid from persecution, might after all be a dream that had no solid basis to rest upon. So much for the action of reason upon impulse.

And then Florence! I was miserable as I thought over our late interview. Her threats, her agitation, her resentment, were perplexing and dangerous; true enough, she saw the storm that was brewing, and she meant "to direct it." Would it not then be better for me to retire altogether from my position in these matters, and leave all to take its course? With Colonel D'Arcie cognizant of all the facts, surely no great evil could overtake the Donovans—

as a magistrate, a soldier, and the father of a family, he would protect this helpless female, and her more helpless parent, and I—I might draw back in time, and avoid a sea of troubles.

With this resolve I went to sleep, and rising long before my friend Mr. Dignum was stirring, I breakfasted with Mrs. Connell, and walked up the valley to Rathlynn.

It was market-day, and the petty sessions at Mullikeen, and as I walked along briskly, all the direful forebodings of the night seemed to have passed away with the darkness—my resolution to withdraw myself was forgotten, and I brandished my stick of stout Welsh oak, one that was given me by my uncle Rosse, determined not indeed to be the aggressor, but to repel aggression. I took Mr. Dignum's advice, and determined to show myself openly in

Mullikeen. I was conscious of meaning no evil to any one—what therefore had I reasonably to fear?

I found the town as usual on a market-day, full of people. Many stalls occupied the open space, where every description of Hibernian luxury was offered for sale—crockery of the vilest manufacture—rolls of coarse frieze cloth—apples and pears of a very uninviting character—hampers of an edible sea-weed known as dhoolamaun, herrings, the very quintessence of putridity and salt, and quantities of a fish called haick, much resembling a spent salmon in length and leanness. Also sacks of muscles and cockles, which the poor women brought on their heads or their backs from the distant coast. Add to these choice articles, bluish attenuated mutton hanging at the doors of some, or veal of a week or a fortnight old dangling at the thresholds

of others. And then the low whisky shops, or shibbeen houses, out of which crawled misery and vice in every shape. The whole scene was barbarous and disgusting, to those who had been accustomed to the market-days of our country towns in Merrie England, where everything around speaks of comfort, cleanliness, and abundance.

It was now about eleven o'clock, and the magistrates usually assembled at twelve, and one or more of them were often seen waiting the hour of meeting with groups of the neighbouring proprietors, in front of the "Desmond Arms," talking over the news of the week, or discussing matters of mere local import. I sauntered down the wide street, and seeing my friend Colonel D'Arcie standing conversing with two or three other gentlemen, I at once ap-

proached the group. Mr. Fitzpatrick was one, who, as soon as he saw me, gave one of his impudent stares, and moved slowly off, as if to show that he wished it to be understood that he did me the honour to cut my acquaintance. The Colonel, on perceiving me, at once came forward, shook me warmly by the hand, and with an emphatic "Glad to see you *here*, Mr. Wyville," accompanied by a glance, the purport of which I well understood, he invited me to join the group.

Among them was Mr. O'Toole—or, as I ought to denominate him, "the O'Toole," a title to which he laid claim with as much right and reason as any of the other "thes." He was, as usual, joking on everybody and everything, and dealing out execrable puns whenever he had an opportunity. He gave me a kind

of a sarcastic nod, which I returned with a formal bow. I stood here some time conversing, till the gentlemen began to move towards the Court-House, when, having some business on the other side of the river, I walked down the steep descent leading to the bridge. Scarcely had I set foot upon it ere I saw Archibald Fitzpatrick, accompanied by his friend "the young O'Toole," approaching me from the opposite side, and then I knew mischief was in the wind.

It was by no means my wish to have a row of any kind, and had it been possible to avoid them by taking some other road I might have done so —but the parapet on each side shut us in, and it was not my custom to turn my back upon any one. I accordingly walked forward, when the two

heroes, after whispering together a moment, parted—one taking the right-hand path—the other the left—manifestly implying that they did not intend me to pass them quietly.

Advancing leisurely, and with indifference, on Archibald's side, I was soon within a few yards of him, when, raising a thick horsewhip he had in his hand, he told me to move off into the middle of the road, as he "would not give the wall to such a cowardly scoundrel as he knew me to be." There was a something so absurd and ludicrous in pushing against one another for the wall, that I politely stepped on one side to let him pass, when he again raised the stock of his whip with the intention of exercising it across my shoulders.

But Archibald mistook his man. In

the art of offence and defence by pistol, cudgel, or fist I was far his superior, having learned the use of these weapons during my school and university days from the very best of masters. I at once stopped the blow by raising my stick suddenly, and with such force that I struck the whip from his hand, and it would inevitably have gone over the battlement into the river, had I not caught it in my left hand, and thrown it to him with a sneer of contempt.

"I will not follow up my advantage, Mr. Archibald Fitzpatrick, but restore your whip with a caution how you use it again," said I, moving forward.

He was for the moment taken aback, and I might have passed on, had not the O'Toole, junior, coming behind me,

attempted to settle matters by giving me a *coup de grace* on the head; but I was too quick for him; I seized his cudgel in my left hand by a rapid movement, and applying my own to his back with right good-will, caused him to bellow for his life, and to run away towards the town as fast as his legs could carry him.

Archibald and I now stood face to face, and it was manifest that he did not half like his position. A crowd now began to gather, and, as if by magic, a number of young fellows came on brandishing their shillelahs, and ranged themselves on the side of young Fitzpatrick. Thus reinforced, he ran at me again, and would have struck me a desperate blow with the iron handle of his whip, had I not suddenly stepped back, and ere he could recover

himself, given him a few smart blows on the shoulders with my stick and knocked off his hat into the river. But the odds were now against me; two fellows came forward and attacked me, while the discomfited Archibald, writhing from the pain, and with his head unprotected, seemed well inclined to give up the contest. But when he saw the turn things were taking, he again—but more cautiously—advanced, on which, feeling my situation dangerous, I rushed at him, and with one well-directed blow, laid him sprawling on the ground. The shout that followed this feat brought many others to the scene, and soon I found that I, too, had "my back," for Dan McBride, Mick Daly, Larry Lanigan, and a select few of their friends, were rushing down the hill, prepared for as pretty a scrimmage as Mulli-

keen had witnessed for many a long day.

I would willingly have got out of this *mêlée*, not wishing to have any participation in this species of Hibernian "divarshun," but a huge fellow with broad chest, big calves, and a shock head, dressed in a long-tailed frieze coat, corduroy breeches untied at the knees, and black stockings, made a sudden assault upon me, and before I was aware dealt me such a blow on one shoulder, meant doubtless for my head, that I staggered backward and fell upon one knee. He was about to repeat the blow when Larry stepped in and aimed a telling blow at the fellow's big calves, in the expectation, I suppose, of disabling him for the moment. But one kick from the giant sent little Larry spinning to the other side of the bridge.

I would again willingly have retired, but my antagonist, shouting out "Noolans-a-boo," rushed at me with the intention at once to demolish me. By a kind of mutual consent, the other belligerents grounded their shillelahs, and regarded with intense interest the contest about to be waged between Dick Noolan and the "Foreigner." Willingly, as I have said, would I have declined this combat, but I was now obliged to stand on self-defence, and I determined, if possible, to give Mr. Dick Noolan one such hit on his thick skull as would satisfy him for a time at least. But the fellow turned out no common antagonist, and several of his blows were so quick and well aimed, that I was considerably punished, and my left arm disabled ere I had an opportunity of returning his favours with interest. Cool and collected, as I

always am on such occasions, I stood on the defensive, and waited my time till, one of his blows having fallen short, I brought the thick end of my oaken staff in such serious contact with his skull, that, had it not been next to a solid lump, it must have scattered his brains, if he had any, in the faces of the bystanders.

A wild shout of applause issued from my supporters, and as the fight now became general, I was moving quietly off, when a constable, forcing his way through the crowd, seized me by the collar, and exhibiting a summons, told me that I must attend the magistrates now sitting in the Court-House. Shaking myself loose from the fellow, and asking how he dared to lay hands upon me, I quietly obeyed the summons, and made my way up to

the Court-House, followed by a concourse of women and children, shouting and screaming, blessing and denouncing, *more Hibernico.*

What on earth could have brought me into this undesirable position, I was for some time at a loss to conceive; but on demanding the summons which the ignorant jack-in-office had still in his hand, I found it was for assault and battery on Titus O'Toole, Esq., Junr., of Mullahash. Well knowing how matters stood in this case, I at once entered the Court-House.

It was a long room, accessible by a flight of stone steps without, and being coved up to the rafters, and very roughly plastered and whitewashed, had a mean and dirty appearance. Three magistrates occupied one side of a common deal-table at the further end

of the room; while their clerk, a stout little man, with a bald head, a round Hibernian face, full of impudence, conceit, and self-importance, sat on the other side, with his bundle of papers, and a few loose abstracts from various Acts of Parliament. The elder of these magnates was a fine gentlemanly-looking man, about fifty, whose opinion was manifestly of great weight in the Court. On his left sat a little, sharp, vulgar, forward fellow, with eyes like a hawk, and a person which knew no rest—fidgetty, and eager for action. He scrutinized the summonses, handled the depositions, dashed into an Act of Parliament, and seemed to think the time lost till he could have some victim to torture and insult. The other justice was a quiet, good-looking gentleman, who took—at least, on this occasion—

but little share in what was going on.

Colonel D'Arcie entered as my case was called. He looked at me with surprise, and took his seat on the other side of Mr. Ellesmere, the senior magistrate.

"We thought, Mr. Wyville," said the senior justice, "that you would prefer meeting this charge to-day, as the witnesses are on the spot. We therefore sent Casey, the constable, to ask whether this was your desire."

"Thank you, sir," replied I, "but I presume the man was not ordered to capture me like a felon, collar me in the street, and bring me here whether I would or not?'

"He had no such orders from me," said Mr. Ellesmere, "and in so doing his conduct was at once unlawful and outrageous."

"Then I beg your worship will grant me a summons for the assault," said I, determined to show a bold front from first to last.

"Certainly," replied the magistrate. "Mr. Fisk,"—addressing the clerk—"take down the particulars, and issue the summons."

Of all the men on earth, Prussians perhaps excepted, the common Irish are the completest bashaws and jacks-in-office whenever they have the opportunity. Cringing, mean, and obsequious as subordinates, once put a staff into an Irishman's hand, or a pen behind his ear, and his insolence rises like the quicksilver in fine weather, and he becomes insolent and tyrannical, often stretching his little and perchance brief authority far beyond the requirements or the checks of the law.

"Your honour's worship!" exclaimed the astonished constable, "sure you would never give me a summons to serve on myself, and for nothing at all!"

"Do you deny, then, what Mr. Wyville states?" inquired the magistrate.

The constable looked at the little gentleman whom we have already described, who, thus appealed to, hastily said—

"Mr. Wyville was kicking up a row, and the constable only did his duty."

"Sir," said I, "I beg to give your statement a flat contradiction. I was kicking up no row—I was walking quietly away when this man seized me. I presume, then, it was by your orders I was thus maltreated?"

"Sure it was, and by whose else?" said the constable, triumphantly; "his honor tould me what to do, and I did it, and

who's a word to say against him, and he a justice?"

"As this was the case," replied I, coolly, "an action will lie against the person who sent you with orders to assault me, though he is a justice; and that, sir," continued I, looking him steadily in the face, "I will see to in due time."

"And so you may, and be d—," replied the indignant little great man; "and I beg, moreover, to give you a word of advice, Mr. Dyville, or Devil, or whatever your name may be—go back to your own country—we don't want you here."

"Mr. McOwl," said Colonel D'Arcie, sternly, "no more of this—such proceedings and such language are not calculated to maintain the dignity of the court. Mr. Wyville has been improperly treated, and the law is on his side so far. Now for the case. Call up Mr. Titus O'Toole, junior."

This young gentleman made his appearance in no very creditable condition. His arm was in a sling, and his head tied up, though I was not at all aware, nor did I believe that my stick had come violently in contact with either.

The charge made by "the O'Toole, junior," was that I had crossed the road, and without any provocation assaulted and injured him, as must be apparent to the justices.

"By all the powers," exclained McOwl, "this is too bad. You will find Donegal too hot for you, young fellow," addressing me, "if this is the habit you have about you. Egad, I wish you had only lifted your stick at me."

"And so I would in a moment," replied I, "if you had acted towards me as that young man dared to do. But, sir," continued I, addressing Mr.

Ellesmere, "I came here for justice and not for insult, and if that person—(pointing at McOwl)—does not know his duty, I must beg leave to quit the court and be heard through counsel in another place. I can tell him in one word——"

"No more of this," said Mr. Ellesmere, interrupting me. "State your own case, sir, and you may depend upon justice being done according to the evidence."

I at once obeyed. I detailed the whole of the late proceedings, and insisted that I had in no case acted otherwise than in self-defence. The O'Toole, junior, flatly contradicted my statement, and brought forward a witness to support his view of the transaction. As this fellow was one of those who had been in the fray, I objected to his evidence, but McOwl again

interfered and insisted he should be heard.

"In that case," replied I, "as I have a ground of summons myself against that man for assaulting me, I shall certainly appeal to a higher Court, and see what twelve honest men in a jury-box will think of the matter."

At this moment poor Larry made his appearance, his face swollen and bleeding, and his person bearing other evident marks of rough treatment. As he had been a witness of the fray, I called upon him to give evidence in case the other man was admitted as a witness.

"We cannot," said Colonel D'Arcie, "admit the evidence of any partizan in such a case as this, and if no better is to be found, after what Mr. Wyville has said, we have no alternative

but to have the case tried at the General Quarter Sessions.

"But plaze your Worships," said Larry, coming forward, "there were plenty of witnesses besides the boys in the scrimmage. Father Matt was passing the Bridge at the time, and saw it all from beginning to end."

"Then call the Priest," said Mr. Ellesmere, and soon the worthy gentleman made his appearance.

His evidence was given in a straightforward, simple style. He heard young Fitzpatrick first menace and insult me, and also saw both him and the O'Toole, junior, assault me as I was evidently endeavouring to avoid them.

"Yes, he would have run away, if he could, no doubt," said McOwl. My eye met his as he spoke this, and whether there was something in my glance the

cowardly misrepresentative of justice did not like, I know not, but he did not afterwards open his mouth more that once.

"Run away, is it, that the master would?" exclaimed Larry, looking scornfully at McOwl through the one eye that was at present open; "run away is it? By all the powers, I wouldn't have you, Justice McOwl, and the two best fellows in Mullikeen, not barring Dick Noolan, meet him on a fair stage and no favor, if you'd a regard for your skull and the bones of your back, to say nothing of your ribs. Sure he's an ilegant fighter entirely."

"Get out of court, you little vagabone," cried Mr. Fisk, "and wait till you're spoken to by their Worships." And suiting the action to the word, he gave poor Larry a push that sent him reeling

to the other side of the room. Indignant at this treatment of my poor and over-zealous friend Larry, I looked at Colonel D'Arcie, but he had turned his head away, and I felt it prudent to be silent After the evidence of Father Matt, who, as a Roman Catholic, could not be supposed to have any bias in an affair between two Protestants, I was discharged, and Titus O'Toole, junior, had to pay costs—all agreeing, with the exception of Mr. McOwl, who observed that "a Priest's evidence was not worth listening to, and ought not to have been taken."

So ended the market-day at Mullikeen, and leaving the Court-House, I proceeded up the main street, Dan McBride, Mick Daly, Larry Lanigan, and their friends escorting me on my way. Several of them bore marks of the scrimmage on the Bridge, and when we reached the

open country I threw them a sovereign to "buy plaster with."

"Long life to your honor," said Larry, as he picked it up, "and sure it's the plaster we shall all want this blessed day, for we're going to play it out on the Bridge, and Brian Coogan of Shinkanisky is just come down to have a look at big Dick Noolan, so we will have a fine fight anyhow. Long life, master, and may the Lord encrase you!"

I had walked along briskly for about a mile when I heard wheels behind me, and soon Colonel D'Arcie came up and invited me to take a seat in his car, and to go on as his guest to Doonore. I readily assented.

"I hurried after you," said the Colonel, "because I scarcely thought it safe for you to return alone to Rathlynn. Not that I deny, or at all

doubt your capability of taking care of yourself," continued he, smiling. "We will talk the whole matter over after dinner. I am glad you showed yourself at Mullikeen this day, though the upshot was not very agreeable, but you will be safe from annoyance, now that some of them know the weight of your cudgel."

"I cannot compliment you, Colonel, on your petty courts of justice," said I. "The conduct of that Mr. McOwl would in England have caused a complaint to be made to the Lord Chancellor."

"And rightly so," replied Colonel D'Arcie, "but it unfortunately happens that most of the appointments in this country are political, and thus many low, vulgar, and ignorant men are exalted to the Bench—"

"Whose exaltation," interrupted I,

"ought to have been of a very different sort."

"This person who so grossly insulted you," continued the Colonel, not noticing my interruption, "is useful to us from his knowledge of the Irish language—otherwise, he is a positive nuisance. Indeed, it is all we can do to keep McOwl down, for, presuming on his local knowledge, he would take the lead in everything. But the selection of unfit men for the magistracy is, in fact, one of our heaviest grievances."

"What notice, Colonel D'Arcie, should I take of Mr. McOwl's conduct as regards the constable?"

"None. In a country half civilized as this is, you must put up with some things, and be blind to more. It has been, and to a great degree still is, the land of jobs and jobbery; all our in-

stitutions, particularly in the west, are out of joint, and we must be patient even while we are endeavouring to improve then."

"And as to Archibald Fitzpatrick?"

"Let him alone is my advice. He has got a check he will not fail to remember, and as he was the aggressor no one can blame you. The doctor told me that he had just dressed a most hideous gash in his head. Archibald was ever a bully, and I think he will not venture to annoy you again. The people, too, seem to think he only met with his deserts. The Fitzpatricks were never popular."

With such discourse we whiled away the time till we arrived at Doonore, and I soon found myself seated near a large fire in the drawing-room, chatting merrily with the young ladies.

"We have again seen your 'friend,' Miss Donovan," said Susan archly, "and she is anxious to consult my father and you on some very special matter. As we thought Rathlynn was a long way from Ballybog, and the walk disagreeable, we ventured to excuse you, and proposed to send my father. Don't you thank us?"

CHAPTER XI.

And must thou go, and must we part?
Yes, fate decrees, and I submit,
The pang that rends in twain my heart,
Oh Mary! dost thou share in it?

H. Kirke White.

The next morning I rose very stiff from the blows I had received from Dick Noolan's cudgel; that he, however, was in a worse condition than I was, I was well convinced. My left arm, indeed, was highly inflamed and painful, so that, after Mrs. Doran had fomented it well and applied a cooling wash of her own invention, I was obliged to

submit to have it suspended by a sling, with strict orders to keep it as quiet as I could."

"Lord bless you, sir, when I lived with my husband in County Mayo," said my kind housekeeper, as she finished her operations, "there was no end of applications for Jenny Traynor's wash. Traynor was my maiden name, and sure your honor would never believe the number of cracked skulls and broken ribs, let alone the bruises all over the bodies of the poor silly creatures, that knocked one another about every mortal fair day, just for nothing at all that I ever heard of. You must have had a sad fall to crush your arm in this way, I'm thinking. But, sir, have you seen Mick and Dan? One has his head bound up, and the other has a great black mark on his cheek-bone. They

tell me the ice was very slippery on the Bridge of Mullikeen, and that neither the master nor they could keep their feet."

"Have you seen Larry, Mrs. Doran?"

"Larry? No indeed, sir; his wife was up here this morning to say he wanted a bottle of the wash, and some linen and ointment. He wasn't out of his bed when Ailey called."

"I suppose," said I, laughing, "that Larry, too, slipped down on Mullikeen Bridge."

"Well, truly, if it was not that your honor is in it too, I should think there had been more hot blood than frozen water in the matter."

After breakfast I sent for the two boys, and finding that they were not absolutely disabled I resolved to row up to Ballybog, as I felt pretty sure

of the meaning of Mary Donovan's message. It was a fine, bright, cheerful winter's morning, and the calm glassy surface of the lake reflected each rock and mountain on its broken margin. The fresh bracing air revived me. As we passed close under "the Mount," I saw Florence pacing the terrace in front of the house. To my astonishment she slightly waved her handkerchief in token of recognition, and seemed to watch the boat as long as it was in sight. I really felt sorry for her, nor could I for one moment believe that she approved of the late proceedings. That her high, proud spirit was galled with her position I well knew, and also that her ardent wish was to escape from her family, with whom she seemed not to have one thought in common. She must

now feel, as I too felt, that all chance of our meeting again was gone, and that for the future we must be as strangers. And yet, on reflection, I was not so sure of that, for she had plainly declared that she was prepared "to act independently of the whole world." Perhaps, after all, things were best as they were, for the friendship of the fair Milesian had become not merely perplexing but full of danger to both.

We did not row as far as Ballybog, but I landed at Flynn's cottage, and walked up the glen and over the mountain. Mary received me at the door, and greeted me with one of her sweet smiles.

"You see, Mr. Wyville," said she as she led the way into the little par lour, "that it is dangerous to make

offers of service if they are meant as mere compliments. I have taken you at your word, and claim your assistance. I suppose the Miss D'Arcies have sent you here? They have been very kind to me, and I feel quite happy in their acquaintance. Miss Susan is very pretty," continued she, after a pause, "and I think you are a great favourite at Doonore."

I fancied that she said this with a forced composure.

"I admire the whole of the D'Arcie family exceedingly," I replied, not appearing to notice her agitation. "The young ladies are certainly pretty, and exceedingly amiable and lively. I am delighted to think that you have thrown away your reserve as regards them, and admitted them to your acquaintance, and I hope to your friendship."

"That can scarcely be—our position in life is so different,—and—and I am not likely to see them again."

Mary's eyes filled with tears, which she vainly tried to repress. She rose from her seat, and went to the window, and gazed upon the lake and distant mountains.

I did not attempt to disturb the free current of her thoughts. I was fully alive to all the painful circumstances of her position. It was some time ere she resumed her seat.

"Pardon me, Mr. Wyville, if I display my weakness to you," said she, while a deep blush suffused her lovely countenance. "I cannot help it. Sometimes the dreary prospect before me gets the better of my spirits, and when I see the happier position and more fortunate prospects of others, I wonder

why my future should seem so hopeless. But, doubtless, it is all for the best. The ways of Providence are just and good, and though we see it not, nor know how it may be, yet, all things will work together for our ultimate advantage. If I had not thorough faith in this, I must despair."

"But why despair?" said I; "we have seen many a stormy morning succeeded by a day of calm and sunshine. The operations of Nature bear a great similitude to human life."

"It may be so, and I pray to be enabled to bear my lot cheerfully. But I do not like these perpetual changes. I have only just become reconciled to my residence in this wild spot, and now we are going, and only to immure ourselves in one yet wilder and more remote. And, Mr. Wyville,

it is on this subject I wish to speak with you. You can aid us."

"I would rather aid you in anything," replied I, greatly agitated, "than in leaving this place. Can I not so assist you that you can remain where you are? When you are gone, all my interest in this country will depart with you!"

She looked up in my face with an expression of something more than gratitude.

"We must not talk thus, Mr. Wyville," said she, softly, "it is useless, and I will confess only adds to my regrets. I must leave you all, all who have been so kind to me, and for ever; but I shall carry the recollection of your goodness into my foreign home, and there it will be a solace and a comfort to me."

"You should never go, dearest Mary," said I, seizing her hand, "if I could prevent it. Would that I were a free agent, and dared to tell you all I feel. But I am spell-bound—I cannot do what I would."

"I will not pretend to misunderstand you, Mr. Wyville," said she, "but this had better be a forbidden subject between us. More than friends we can never be. We shall soon part, never to meet again, let us therefore avoid all vain topics, and consider more practical objects. I wish to ask your advice and assistance for our journey My poor father can of course suggest nothing, and I am almost equally ignorant how to proceed. In a fortnight we think of quitting Ballybog. Father Roche was here yesterday, and approves our plan. He does not think

it safe for us to remain here in more respects than one; but he cannot mix himself up with our plans—it might involve him, he says, in difficulties, but how I know not. He said he would consult you, but I told him I would see you myself."

"Thank you," ejaculated I, warmly, "I would prefer much acting directly under your orders. But is there no way of changing your plans and inducing you to remain here?"

"None. I wish there was, for I have been more happy lately than for a long time previous."

"But do not, dear Mary, say that we shall never meet again. That shall not be—the time will come that I shall be my own master. It is useless for me to conceal from you that I

love you—oh, how ardently and how sincerely I cannot make you understand! So sincerely, however, that space shall not divide us—the broad Atlantic and the cloud-capped Andes shall offer no obstacles to me; go where you will I will follow, for I feel that without you all the world—its wealth, and its honours, are as nothing."

Mary attempted to speak, but for some time in vain. As however she grew more composed, she again went to the window, and in a short time resumed her seat.

"All this is very painful to me," at length, she said, "but it has arisen naturally perhaps from our position. I feel I have acted incautiously in admitting your visits; but I was told that you were engaged, and about to marry Miss Fitzpatrick."

"Which was false," replied I, warmly. "My father's injunction was that I should not marry an Irish girl. Without his consent I could not break the promise I made him, and that consent I know would not at present be given. In some respects I admire the character of Florence Fitzpatrick, but the thought of making her my wife never entered my head."

"And I always thought as much, notwithstanding the positive declarations of her brother on the subject. I never believed that Mr. Wyville, a rich, well-born Englishman, would seek a wife on the shores of the Lake of Rathlynnl unless, indeed, the attractions of Doonore," added she, with a melancholy playfulness, "should prove invincible."

"Dearest Miss Donovan—dearest Mary," said I, impetuously, "I never loved

any but you, and I never shall. Only give me some proof that my love is returned, and though you fly to the very bounds of the globe I will find you out. My promise to my father cannot bind me after I have ceased to reside in this country."

"It was not for this that I invited this meeting," replied Mary, sorrowfully. "Every sentiment of honour and propriety forbids me to listen to arguments like these. Whatever was the state of my own feelings, I could never submit to enter any family that was unwilling to receive me, nor should I be exhibiting the gratitude to yourself which I really deeply feel, did I take advantage of these temporary and inconsiderate emotions to inflict upon you what I well know would prove a serious injury. No, no, Mr. Wyville,

let us not increase the difficulties of our position by such conversations as these! I cannot, I dare not, listen to them; and if persisted in, I must look elsewhere for that assistance which we at present require. Oh! pardon me if I seem harsh and ungrateful, but I feel quite bewildered with my situation, and though anxious to do everything that is right and prudent, circumstances force me to use expedients I would otherwise gladly avoid."

Though there was nothing in all this discouraging to my hopes, yet I felt it would only annoy, if not indeed offend, should I persist in pressing my suit; I therefore at once changed the subject, and gave my advice in concerting measures for their leaving Ballybog. It was agreed that, as it was necessary their intentions should be

secret, I should go to Belfast myself, and seek out some vessel bound for the British Colonies in North America, and, engaging berths under a feigned name, ascertain the exact day of sailing. Father Roche had promised to escort them by night as far as Letterkenny, and to forward them from thence under the protection of a friend of his own who could be depended upon.

I acquiesced in all these arrangements with a heavy heart. The beauty, the virtues, and insinuating graces of Mary Donovan had completely taken me captive—I loved her deeply and sincerely, and notwithstanding all the apparently insurmountable obstacles to our union, I felt determined in my own mind not to relinquish all hope. On bidding her adieu, I briefly told her so; she

only smiled sadly and made no answer.

"I would have you by all means read that to the Admiral," said my uncle Rosse, as I closed the manuscript. "It would please him mightily to find that his only son, lineal in descent from Reginald de Wyville, who figures in the Roll of Battle Abbey, is wooing and trying to win one Miss Donovan of Ballybog, county Donegal, the only daughter and sole heiress of a bankrupt speculator, if not swindler."

"If you could see her, sir," replied I, "you would not so much wonder. Besides, I once heard you say that, when with your regiment in Ireland, you might have been tempted to run away with one Bridget O'Flaherty of

Mullingar, had not a sudden and peremptory order changed your quarters, and sent you off to Kinsale."

"Oh! I was but a foolish young fellow in those days, Frank—but then Bridget was of a good family, a cousin of Sir Michael O'Flaherty, of Glangowly, whereas—but less said about this the better. I am glad you gave that young puppy O'Toole a sound drubbing, and if your friend Archibald had known that you won the prize cup at Tiverton in the great single-stick match, egad! I think he would have let you alone. I cannot help feeling sorry for that poor sister of his. She seems a fine spirited girl, and did not play her cards badly. She nearly nailed you, my boy, in the cottage that dark night—not one in a hundred could have withstood it."

"I already loved Mary Donovan too deeply to think of any one else. I felt as if my destiny drew me towards her. I vainly contested the matter with my own heart—I could not help it. Her friends, her station, her family, all were indifferent to me. I thought of her, and of her only. There was a magnetism about her I could not resist."

"I'faith, nephew, 'this love,' as Biron saith, 'is mad as Ajax.' It is bound by no laws, knows no obstacles."

"It is even so, sir," said I, "and as is also well expressed by that same Biron you have quoted—

> 'The sea will ebb and flow—Heaven show his face,
> Young blood will not obey an old decree,
> We cannot cross the cause why we were born.'"

"Well quoted, Frank, but not even Shakespear will bring the Admiral round to your opinion. These first impressions

have ruined the prospects of many a promising young fellow. He dreams of a kind of heaven upon earth—he sees nothing before him but summer days and glorious sunshine, till sad experience teaches him that there are clouds and tempests. and wintry blasts to encounter, which paralyse his energies, and cause his days to be wasted in those low, all-engrossing domestic cares which clip his wings and impede every effort to an upward flight. This was the case with my poor brother. His talents marked him for a high position among his fellow-men, but, like you, he yielded weakly to what he too called his destiny, married contrary to our wishes a Roman Catholic lady, estranged himself voluntarily from his family, and, led away by the ardour and enthu-

siasm of his nature, entered into projects which brought upon him that ruin which consigned him to poverty, banishment, and neglect. His proud spirit would not yield to any of our overtures for reconciliation, and he died in a foreign land, deprived of every comfort, and far from the aid and sympathy of those who still love and cherish his memory. I know, my dear Frank, how generally futile all attempts are to prevent such sad and ill-assorted unions, how perverse are the humours, how baseless the calculations of young minds, so inexperienced and thus infatuated; therefore, while I abstain from urging my advice upon you, I give you in my own family a notable instance of the imprudence and almost certain evil consequences attendant on such ill-advised connections. You know

the Admiral—you know he would never forgive such a folly as you are, I fear, about to perpetrate, and if cut off, as you would be from his favour and support, you would soon find that all this beauty you so admire would soon fade away, and all those attractions you so adore at present would be as nothing, when poverty, neglect, disappointed hopes, and the cares possibly of a family, came down upon you like an avalanche, sweeping away every source of happiness and confort."

"My dear sir," replied I, "you are anticipating evils that may never exist. "I thank you for your kind advice, and the interest you take in my future destiny; but I am not the first who has blindly, for the moment, yielded to strong impressions. It was your own case—it is the case of most men—it is

a condition of our nature; but how seldom does it happen that marriage is the consummation of a first love? Do not then judge me hastily. I have written a faithful account of all my doings at Rathlynn, and I sit here with you at this moment as free and independent as you are yourself. Whatever, therefore, I may do hereafter cannot be from blind impulse and sudden passion."

"Well, well, Frank, perhaps I'm wrong —I hope so; we will pursue your narrative, for I confess myself to be more interested than I expected. Rochefoucault says, 'A man of sense may love like a madman, but never like a fool.' I will hope therefore, as you have generally your senses about you, that you will make good the truth of the maxim."

"But, sir," replied I, "Gay tells us that 'in love we are all fools alike.'"

"And Gay was right," replied Mr. Rosse, "he was the better philosopher of the two."

END OF VOL. II.

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